The Experience of Education
Of the Army Child

By

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Abstract

In the UK, there are over 100,000 children from an army background and parliamentary debate has highlighted the issue of the challenging experiences of these children in local schools. Using an ethnographic approach, this thesis investigates the educational experiences of army children. Four year eight children from one school were observed and interviewed in order to build up in-depth case studies. In addition, the outcomes from discussions with their parents, teachers and other associated education and army professionals were explored. The emerging findings were subsequently compared with findings from a second research site. Working within a socio-cultural theoretical framework, it was found that there was a clash of cultures between the world of the army and the world of the school. As a result, army children's needs were not sufficiently identified and understood and neither the army nor schools attended to the children's needs. Furthermore, the culture of the home was seen to have a strong effect on the educational experiences of the army child with the role of the mother being considered to be particularly important. Another important finding was that the mobile lifestyle also had a negative effect on the children's educational experiences. As a result, the children developed unique and individual coping strategies. The research has implications for both military and educational policy makers, as well as for the teachers and parents of army children, in terms of collaboration between army and local education authorities in order to improve the educational experiences of the army child. More generally, the research addresses the role of the home in supporting school experiences and suggests that further research into the effect of mobility on children's educational achievement is necessary.

Acknowledgements

In his book on conducting educational research, Michael Bassey commented that PhD students had a tendency to thank everyone in their lives (1999: 5). Why should I be any different? I, too, have a cast of thousands!

To my Director of Studies, Dr Birgit Pepin and my supervisor, Dr Norman Black – thank you both for keeping me on the straight and narrow and making me laugh; to all my colleagues at the OU – thank you for being there to get me over the final hurdle; to Jan in the library for never failing to find me a book and to Lena for all the IT support; to EB and Glenis for the lunches and B and B facilities during data collection; to the staff, pupils and parents of Upton and Alchester Schools for allowing me into their lives - my special thanks to Jean and Debs who are both inspirational teachers. Finally, but most importantly, to Matthew and Mum. You will never know how much you have contributed to this. You are my sounding boards and confidence boosters.

I dedicate this to my grandparents. If life is a constant series of learning experiences then they were my first teachers. I continue to miss them.

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AFF – Army Families' Federation

BSA – Boarding Schools' Allowance

CEAS – Children's Education and Advisory Service formerly known as SCE(UK)

DfES – Department for Education and Skills formerly the DfE, Department for Education and the DfEE, Department for Education and Employment

DHE – Defence Housing Executive

LA – Local Authority (formerly Local Education Authority)

MOD – Ministry of Defence

NASSSC – National Association of State Schools for Service Children

OfSTED – Office for Standards in Education

RAC – Royal Armoured Corps

SCE – Service Children's Education

SEN – Special educational needs

SFTF – Service Families' Task Force

SSAFA – Soldiers' Sailors' and Air Men's Families' Association

Contents

Chapter One – Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher outlines her rationale for undertaking this piece of research. The research questions are explored and are then related to the different chapters of the thesis.

1 – THE BEGINNING

The Services have always been a part of the researcher's life. As a child, the researcher was used to her father being away from home as a result of his being in the Merchant Navy. Both of the researcher's grandfathers were in the armed forces – one in the Army and the other in the Navy. It was normal to talk about living in other countries, which both of her parents had done as children. Photographs of life on service estates overseas were part of the family photograph albums. It is not that all of these things formed a significant memory, it is more that the Service lifestyle was an accepted and integral part of her childhood. Service life was normalised in many ways. The researcher went on to marry an army officer. As a result of her husband's work, she lived in a quarter on a small army estate attached to one of the army's phase-two training establishments. The experience of service life, therefore, went on into adulthood.

The researcher is a qualified teacher of Modern Foreign Languages. Although she did not teach in the secondary school that was considered to be the 'catchment' school for the army estate she lived on, she came into contact with many army children who lived on the estate. It was through comparing the outward behaviour of the army children at home with the behaviour of the 'civilian' children that she taught at school that she realised that the army children did behave differently. As a result, she started to wonder what it was about their past experiences which might have led them to react to life in their individual ways. The researcher felt that the army children appeared to be very self-sufficient, almost 'street-wise', but that this was superficial and hid a range of emotional experiences underneath.

Between 1999 and 2001, the researcher undertook a Master's degree in Education. As part of the final module of this course, the researcher was required to undertake a small-scale research project that might lead to a doctoral level research proposal. It was from the researcher's unique perspective of secondary school teacher, army wife and former navy child that the idea for a viable piece of research emerged, bringing together the professional and private lives of the researcher. For the small-scale research project for her Master's degree, the researcher interviewed one army student in year ten and two army parents, one of whom was the army student's mother. The interview with the army student focused on the student's previous and current educational experiences, relationships with teachers and friends, as well as future aspirations. The interview with the parents looked into family strategies for coping with moving and means of support. This pilot research suggested that the army student was very independent and separated his home and school life. The student had experienced problems when moving schools due to duplicating work. Furthermore, the process of moving house was normalised by the family and was approached very pragmatically, rather than with any emotion. Neither of the parents talked about support that they drew upon to help guide them in their decision-making about their children's education.

The researcher considered the small-scale research project to be successful in two ways. Firstly, carrying out a piece of research enabled to researcher to practice many of the data collection techniques necessary in a piece of doctoral level research. Ethical issues and day-to-day realities of research were experienced at first hand. Secondly, the small-scale research suggested that little work had been conducted within the UK in this area and that there were relevant issues to be explored. As a result, the researcher wrote a research proposal and registered for a research degree that would allow her to explore the educational experiences of army children in greater detail.

2 – THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Following her acceptance onto the research degree programme at Oxford Brookes University, the researcher undertook a year's preparation of her research proposal before submitting it to the Research Degree Committee for full registration as a research degree student (phase one of the PhD). During this time, the researcher undertook a small-scale literature review and decided on appropriate research questions and data-collection strategies.

The overall aim of the research was to develop an understanding of the educational experiences of army children at Secondary level. The findings from the small-scale research project led to a desire to focus on the experiences of the army children from their own perspectives. It was decided, therefore, that the over-riding research question would ask:

- What is the experience of education of the army child?

This would be achieved through the exploration of several sub-questions:

- What are the factors that influence these educational experiences?
- How do these army children perceive their educational experiences?
- How do other people perceive the educational experiences of the army child?

3 – THE CHAPTERS

In this section, each chapter is described so that it is clear how and where each of the research questions outlined above are answered.

In chapter two, the literature review, the researcher sub-divides relevant literature into the thematic areas of background and historical perspectives,

sociological and psychological perspectives and the experiences of other similar groups. Within this chapter, therefore, the first research sub-question is answered (what are the factors that influence these educational experiences) as the background factors pertaining to the experience of education of army children are explored.

In chapter three, the research methodology chapter, the over-arching research methodology is explored and explained. Firstly, the researcher focuses on the use of ethnography – its form and function, as well as issues arising from this use of this methodology. The researcher then explores each data collection method and outlines the various forms and issues pertinent to each method. The chapter concludes by focusing on the various issues that the researcher had to address during the data collection phase. This chapter demonstrates how many of the theoretical issues addressed in research methodology were put into practice during the course of the data collection phase.

In chapter four, the researcher outlines the context within which the research was conducted. By reviewing documents gathered at national and local level, this chapter explores the national picture of the educational experiences of army children, as well as the research sites of Upton and Alchester. It also provides information relating to the background and home experiences of army children as a means of understanding their culture. As a result of this contextual information, the researcher presents further evidence in support of the first research sub-question (what are the factors that influence these educational experiences).

In chapter five, the researcher presents data gathered from the perspective of the four army children at the centre of this research. Whilst the four case studies are presented within the appendices to this thesis, chapter five presents the themes emerging from the cases. Themes considering background information, the children and the army and the children and their schools are considered, as well as themes looking into the children's parents and the army and the parents and schools. After this inter-case analysis, the

themes are related to relevant literature and research. Finally, the chapter ends with a within-case analysis of themes as a means of deepening the understanding of each individual child. The chapter, therefore, presents the reader with evidence in support of the second research sub-question (how do these army children perceive their educational experiences). Although some findings from the children's parents are presented, this is done so in order to contextualise the findings of the children.

Wider findings, gathered from the teachers and headteacher of the four focus children, as well as beyond the first research site school (for example, from Local Authority officials, army welfare officials and the second research site) are presented in chapter six. The chapter considers the themes that emerge from the wider findings – themes of conflict, attitudes to boarding school education, funding, curriculum issues, attainment, special needs, admissions, files and isolation are explored. These themes are then related to relevant literature and research. In this way, the chapter addresses the third research sub-question - how do other people perceive the educational experiences of the army child?

Chapter seven brings together the researcher's analysis, discussion and theorisation of this research area. Five theories that have emerged from this research are presented in turn. Each theory is presented and relevant findings from this research and literature are then brought into the discussion. In doing so, the researcher answers the main research question and suggests what the experience of education of the army child might be. Finally, chapter eight presents a summary of the conclusions and recommendations the researcher would like to make in relation to the research undertaken as part of this thesis. The chapter summarises the research to date and then suggests ways of addressing the theories that were highlighted in chapter seven. In doing so, the researcher seeks to bridge the divide between theory and practice by suggesting recommendations pertinent to army children, their families and teachers, as well as to policy-makers at a local and national level.

References are presented at the end of this volume. In Volume Two, the stories of the four army children at the centre of this research are also presented, as well as copies of all original data (transcripts of interviews, field notes and observations). Further information is also made available: a table outlining the observations made for each child; a matrix of information relating to each focus child and initial analysis of this; an outline of coding (analysis) conducted after data collection; a detailed outline of the time frame of data collection.

Chapter Two - The Literature Review

In this chapter, the factors affecting the experience of education of the army child and suggested ways of understanding these experiences are outlined. The chapter has been divided into four sections. Firstly, the background and historical overview of army children's education are explored, followed by a discussion of relevant sociological and psychological perspectives. Together, sections one and two help to provide an overview of the background and cultural factors which can influence army children. The chapter continues with an overview of some of experiences of other highly mobile groups of children, in order to compare and contrast between groups. A concluding statement sums up the issues explored.

1 – BACKGROUND AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

Historical Perspectives in the UK

Army children have experienced a range of educational experiences throughout history. Regimental schools, established principally to educate soldiers, allowed for some instruction of children accompanying the regiment. Both Williams (1971) and Venning (2005) examined historical documentation relating to army children and concluded that the earliest established school was set up in Tangiers in 1675. Oddy's case study (2000) of one Scottish family in the Victorian period uncovered the view that women and children were viewed as 'camp followers' and only a fraction of wives were given the official 'married status' recognised by the army which brought them both housing and food allowances. Garrett's autobiographical account (1999) of army life in the 1950s and 1960s focused on the growing tradition of sending children back to the UK, to boarding schools, for their education. Garrett's cheery "after another forty-eight hours during which time we ascertained that the children had settled in happily, we were off" (p185) underlined the matter of fact way that she viewed sending her children to the UK to school, but was indicative of the normality of sending one's children away for their education. (The Boarding School Allowance, or BSA, is open to any member of the army,

in order to subsidise a boarding school education for their child – see chapter five for further details).

The Ministry of Defence has recognised for some time that there are issues concerning the education of the children of serving personnel. In the late 1960s, changes in society such as getting married and having children at an earlier age were also reflected in the make-up of the armed forces. It was feared that these changes would have an adverse effect on recruitment and retention figures within the Services. As a result, Seebohm (1974) and Spencer (1976) chaired Boards of Inquiry in order to review welfare provision in the Royal Navy (Seebohm) and the Army (Spencer). In both reviews, the research was undertaken by an independent board of inquiry rather than an 'in house' team comprised of serving members of the armed forces which may have encouraged personnel involved in the research to speak more freely. The research employed both quantitative (fixed survey design) and qualitative (interview) techniques. Serving members of the armed forces and their wives were involved, as well as other 'expert witnesses' including teachers, educational psychologists and social workers but service children were not asked to participate. As a result, the findings relating to armed forces children were representative of what people thought they experienced, rather than relating to the actual experiences of the children themselves.

Spencer's committee considered the effect on children of a father's absence from home and the number of moves that the family might make. The research found that two thirds of soldiers' wives with children indicated that their children became insecure and difficult to handle when their father was away. This finding was also emphasised by the teachers interviewed. Secondly, there was some concern that there was evidence of "serious backwardness among army children," (p431) due to the impact of mobility on "these children's social development and ability to learn as well as ... their overall educational attainment" (p432). With regard to state schools in areas where there was a high number of army children, head teachers had reported that they found it difficult to attract teachers to their schools given that their job satisfaction might be reduced due to the mobility of the children they taught.

Furthermore, it was often difficult to fully understand the children as their records went missing. Teachers spoke of the children finding lasting friendships difficult to maintain, settling instead for "acquaintances" (p444). Teachers also commented that they knew when their students' fathers had been deployed as they noticed their students withdrawing, followed by "a high level of truancy or of aggressive behaviour" (p444). Spencer commented that much depended on the ability and motivation of the army mother to come to terms with the impact of turbulence.

Spencer made several recommendations. Local authorities should start to co-ordinate their efforts with regard to army families, liasing with each other in order to share good practice. School curricula should be standardised, so that older service children would not have the difficulty of changing examinations board if they are required to move during their final years of schooling. The Service Children's Education group (SCE) (a subsidiary organisation of the Ministry of Defence which oversees the education of service children overseas and advises military parents in the UK) should take responsibility for standardising school records, so that children moving between the UK and overseas postings and within the UK would have appropriate and in-depth information about their educational experiences available for their future schools. Further research should be undertaken into the effect of mobility on education since, previous to 1976, there had been no co-ordinated attempt to investigate the impact of turbulence on education. The army should provide adequate BSA for its families so that families should not have to top-up increasing boarding school fees out of their own pocket and adequate support should be given to families with children with Special Educational Needs (SEN). Finally Spencer recommended that the army should give families travel permits to allow children at school in the UK to travel to their home base, so that the cost should not be passed on to the individual military families concerned.

Following the high profile role of the British Army in the Falklands War (1982), public interest in the Army was generated by two factors. Firstly the media had been allowed to report alongside British troops during the Falklands

Campaign, as outlined in Morrison and Tumber's account (1988) of the increased move towards the mass communication of military conflict. Secondly, soldiers and commanders had published their memoirs of the campaign, for example, Woodward with Robinson (1997) or Collins (2005). Interest was generated within the British public about the welfare arrangements for service personnel and their dependents (Jolly, 1987). As a result, a further welfare review was ordered by the Ministry of Defence (Gaffney, 1987) that produced findings similar to Seebohm (1974) and Spencer (1976) with similar methods, including surveys and interviews with the wives of serving personnel but not their children. Gaffney produced a different set of recommendations, however, and suggested that the Ministry of Defence should look into doubling the length of the average tour of duty (above the usual six months) or consider using the model of the US Army which had tried to locate two postings within the same geographical area. Both might lead to greater family stability. The issue of extending the length of the tour of duty continues to be discussed today (AFJ, 2004).

Black (1984) conducted doctoral research into the experience of education of primary school children from Army and RAF families. Using a sample of 913 children from the three services, Black conducted interviews and observations, as well as measuring the relationship between mobility, attainment and personality using an experimental approach. He concluded that many garrisons were unattractive and discouraging atmospheres in which to live and for many service families, the service community was all consuming and a central part of the family's life and identity. This was also the case for service children who were dependent on the army or RAF and were made impotent by the service's controlling structure. The results showed that service children tended to be less extrovert and more anxious than their civilian counterparts. There was also a difference between the results obtained from the girls and the boys. Girls were seen as being more 'neurotic' but had, on the whole, more favourable attitudes to school than boys. Black drew attention to the paucity of the literature available at that time and considered that the "state of knowledge [was] decidedly sketchy" (1984:102).

International Historical Perspectives

In 1975 the Australian Armed Forces employed Mackay and Spicer to explore the experience of education of the children of their service personnel. Their quantitative study explored four issues through a fixed design approach. Parents and teachers but not service children themselves were sent questionnaires using closed categories. The four issues included the effects of turbulence on a child's general development, service children's attainment in curriculum areas, service children's interest in curriculum areas and the effects of turbulence on specific areas of development, including social adjustment, leisure time and a child's attitude to change. Mackay and Spicer concluded that there was a perception amongst teachers and parents that service children's general development was affected by turbulence. They concluded that there was no difference in attainment between service and civilian children and that turbulence had no effect on the interest children might have in their schooling.

In 1976, the US Army sponsored a series of research papers into the experiences of US military dependents, following the US Army's prolonged involvement in the Vietnam War (1965-72). Amongst these papers, Darnauer (1976) interviewed 60 army children and their parents from one garrison in the USA. He viewed the army as an extended social system, or 'family'. Each military family existed to "meet the needs of the soldier-husband/father," (p47) and, thus, played a supporting and secondary role to the military. Membership of the army 'family' was an important socialising factor for service children, since their friendships tended to be limited to other service children. Darnauer found that adolescents who moved frequently performed less well at school than students who were only "moderately mobile" (p54). Mobility was cited as having an effect on friendships for 70% of the girls interviewed and 50% of the boys. Darnauer considered that "as a protective measure against the pain of leaving, adolescents may develop superficial relationships" (p64).

In the same volume, McCubbin and Dahl (1976) investigated the experience of prolonged family separation and also interviewed 60 military families who had a parent recently returned from Vietnam. They concluded that children

who had experienced extended periods without their father had better family relations since the child became more self-reliant and was used to the parent's absence. Older children were seen as having fewer issues than younger children as they had become more responsible members of the family during their father's absence. Montalvo (1976) investigated the experience of shorter periods of separation for military families. He interviewed 55 military families in order to understand the resources they called upon during periods of family separation. He concluded that military families were a sub-culture of the culture of the military. Army families used military resources for support but that there were difficulties for military families living away from garrisons, where access to military resources was limited. Informal support networks were also described as being important, as, "mutual help [was] a tradition of the military" (p156). Furthermore, it could be seen that the reliance on military support networks encouraged greater dependency on the military. This was not without its consequences for military families. Montalvo asserted that primary relationships amongst army families were perhaps more personal and intimate than those of civilians. Army families were likely to be isolated from civilian activities due to their army networks. Contrastingly, army families were likely to feel alienated if they lived in a civilian community.

The Situation Today

In the UK, the Army's need to emphasise welfare issues was formally acknowledged in 2000. In the foreword to the Armed Forces Overarching Personnel Strategy (MOD, 2000a), it was commented that, "people are the single most important aspect of our operational capability" (in the Foreword). It was realised that soldiers would not be able to work to the best of their ability if their homes and families were not being supported in their absence. Education and schooling, however, were viewed as a "soft issue," that is to say, they were not considered to be central to the primary goal of the Army of military effectiveness and were relegated to becoming a "future target" of the Ministry of Defence (Chapter 1 – Challenges for the Future). The most recent welfare provision survey (SSAFA/AFF, 2001) emphasised that service personnel considered change to be too slow and that welfare issues were still

being swept under the carpet. The 2001 survey was conducted by quasi-independent welfare organisations – 'quasi' because some intimacy with the Ministry of Defence would have been necessary in order to gain access to serving personnel. The chosen methodology of questionnaires and follow-up interviews with serving personnel may not have been fully approved of by other Ministry of Defence organisations. The SCE chose to ignore the qualitative findings, "due to the inadequacies of the current methodology" (SCE, 2004: 20). In this publication, which reviewed the progress of the SCE, one of the eight annual targets was ignored. It could be that this may have been a way of trying to negate the organisation's failure to meet seven out of its eight targets by claiming to have insufficient data to show that a target had/had not been met.

A recent phenomenon has involved service families buying a home and remaining in one place, whilst the serviceman travels with his work, returning home at the end of a tour of duty. Chandler (1989) pointed out that, in 1984, fewer army personnel owned their own homes compared to naval and RAF personnel. As a result, army children moved house more regularly than other service children. Whilst a weekly commute for the serving member of the armed forces might bring greater family stability, Hogarth and Daniel (1988) concluded that, overall, weekly commuting could extract a great toll on family life. Their survey of 105 civilian families found that mothers became, effectively, single parents and that fathers resented not being able to see their children grow up. What makes Hogarth and Daniel's work notable is that they surveyed non-military commuters, who would have been able to talk freely and would not, perhaps, have been negatively affected by a military work ethic.

Service parents might expect that their children will be educated in the same way and to the same standard as children in the UK. In the case of overseas schools, however, education is funded very differently from those in the UK, "we are always competing against all of the other MOD spending priorities" (Smith, 2003: 19). Given the recent conflict in Iraq and the on-going security issues that this presented, the issue of funding education may have become a

casualty of the MOD's changing priorities. The recent parliamentary debate on the issue of service children's education, however, revealed that funding for children in SCE schools was well above that in schools in the UK, with schools receiving an average of £6000 per pupil (Hansard, 2004: Col80WH).

As SCE is funded through the MOD, funding for service schools has not always been on a par with funding for schools in the UK. Children returning to schools in the UK are expected to assimilate into the local community and have all their learning and social needs both understood and provided for by local service providers. Local providers perform this service in the UK with no extra funding from the MOD, and with no obvious forms of intervention or support. The growing interest in military family issues emerging from the higher profile of the services (see earlier discussion) is evident in the many discussions of military issues in the national press. For an example from just one national newspaper, see The Times (12/4/03, 11/6/04, 19/10/04 and 1/11/04). As a result, welfare issues are becoming more obvious than they were even ten years ago, with greater transparency seen in the number of military and related service providers websites.

2 –SCHOOL, FAMILY AND INDIVIDUAL PERSPECTIVES

An overview of the history of the army child can help us to understand more about the nature of their culture and experiences today. This section focuses on two areas - the army family within the broader system of society and the school as the institution charged with delivering education to the army child. As a result, it presents a view of the distinctive experiences of army children today.

The Army Family

Green and Canny (2003) reported on the general effects of relocation due to career changes. This study, using the case studies of twelve large employers and their employees, however, went beyond the concerns of the armed forces and its general conclusions were aimed at national government and policy makers. It seems, therefore, that there has been a move towards

appreciating the effect of mobility on family issues and realising that these issues can only be dealt with at a high level. As Green and Canny concluded, localised initiatives will not work alone as a range of issues need to be taken into account – for example education, transport and welfare provision.

Ministry of Defence figures suggest that women represent only 7.5% of the total number of personnel in the army, less than that represented in the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force (MOD, 2004b). It would be correct to say, therefore, that it is more likely that children will have their father serving in the armed forces, rather than their mother. Given that army fathers are often away from home, either on exercise or on tours of duty, understanding the role of a strong mother is important in helping us to understand how army families and army children cope and, ultimately, whether these absences affect a child's ability to learn at school. David (1993) described the problems of single motherhood while Chandler (1991:139) concluded that "[children] from absent parent families were seen as having the greatest number of emotional problems and the lowest self-esteem." In Topping's work (1986), however, it was reported that improvements were seen in conduct-problem children, whether their behaviour was modified by their mother alone, or by their mother and father together. This could suggest that mothers left alone with their children may well have just as positive an effect on their behaviour as the mother and father working together.

Greenhalgh (1994:77) considered the "super-ego" which some children may exhibit. More importantly, and in relation to army children, he stated that:

> "the beginnings of the development of the super-ego are through the baby's first fears of abandonment by her/his mother, or close parenting figure. If sudden or permanent losses are experienced at this point in development then the chances are that a rather fierce super-ego or 'inner police officer' is born."

Similarly, Clare (2000:175) commented that:

> "the absence from the home of a strong adult male figure has particular implications for mothers with growing, physically aggressive and assertive sons. Psychiatrists, psychologists and social workers are well versed, through their professional work, in the tensions of

> adolescent males when a mother has to step, as it were, into a departed father's shoes."

He went on to demonstrate that sons with "physically and/or psychologically absent" fathers cannot begin to separate from their mothers in the psychological sense, thus turning their future partners into surrogate mothers. Fathers played a role, too, in the development of their daughters, "earlier research work has suggested that a father's willingness to involve himself in a daughter's growing sense of her own potential is influential" (p177). As stated in section one of this chapter, it is important not to view the parents of an army child as being the sole influence upon the development of that child. One must consider the more extended family of the army, where neighbours take on extra status to children whose real relatives may be far away.

With regard to the impact of a mother's education on the progress of the child, Edwards (1993:181) stated that:

> "a mother's education is viewed as important for her children's advancement at school not only through direct influences, such as helping with homework, but also through indirect influences, such as having books around the house and so on."

In army families, where the father may often be away from home, the education of the army mother may be a key to understanding the support that army families can give to school-age children. In Salisbury and Jackson (1996:252) the theme of 'warrior values' is explored, and its impact on the schoolboy is assessed, "the military system is the patriarch under whose influence and discipline a man emerges. Boys become men because being a man is equated with finding discipline." At school this may influence an army child's relationships with their peers and teachers. A particularly difficult time for services' children could be the return of their father:

> "in naval families, some husbands found themselves competing with their children for a wife's attention and time, and wives complained that children did not want to surrender the exclusivity of their mother's interest" (Chandler, 1991: 164).

Jolly (1987:65) assessed the core issues surrounding the educational experiences of army children:

> "security, a feeling of belonging, continuity in the school curriculum and lasting friendships, these things are valued by children who know what educational turbulence is about."

Whilst her research was conducted over ten years ago through interviews with serving personnel and their wives, although not their children, the themes of dislocation and disturbance are still in evidence today. Although army parents are entitled to apply for a BSA, in reality many do not do so. SCE figures suggest that 8000 army children attend boarding school, with just under 100,000 army children being educated in state and SCE schools (MOD, 2000c). Jolly wondered whether this was because children represented, to many parents, the only "fixed point" in their mobile lifestyles.

It would be wrong to view the experience of the army child as entirely negative. Sapsted (2002:12), in her journalistic investigation of mobile families commented that there were huge benefits to mobility, "relocating is a good way of preparing a child for life by experiencing a change of circumstances within the support of the family." This mirrored Wertsch's US based investigation into military children (1991) who, through a range of in-depth interviews and from her own personal experience, claimed that some of the positive points that might be gained from a military lifestyle included a strong sense of responsibility, social skills, resilience, loyalty, discipline and tolerance. Within Parliament, it has been commented that,

> "children from Service families tend to be more gregarious and outgoing. They have a more varied and wider range of experiences than many of the children in school, and the head teachers to whom I have spoken talked positively of the benefits that the children—and their families—can bring to the school in terms of their experiences and their support for the work of the school" (Hansard, 2004: Col97WH).

Many of Wertsch's points (1991) are echoed in Pollock and Van Reken (2001), whose investigation of Third Culture children (see section three of this chapter) underlined many similarities with the experience of the army child. Pollock and Van Reken asserted that there were many benefits to an

internationally mobile childhood. They cited four overall skills – cross-cultural, observational, social and linguistic skills – and sub-divided these into various benefits. They considered the mobile child to have an expanded worldview, to be cross-culturally enriched, to be adaptable, to be able to blend in, to be less prejudiced, to live life for the moment and to be able to appreciate authority. Fail (1995) in her review of 12 adults who had experienced an international school education, found that one third of her sample majored in languages at university.

More recently, the US and British Armies have been involved in overseas conflicts (Gulf War, 1991, Afghanistan, 2001 and the Second Gulf War, 2003) and, as a result, higher operational demands have been placed on military personnel. The US Army is significantly larger than the British Army. Estimates suggest that the US Army in 2004 was up to ten times the size of that in the UK. The US Department of Defence has for a long time supported welfare related research, for example, volumes of research papers edited by Martin et al. 2000 and Ender, 2002, as well as individual pieces of research such as Keller and Decoteau, 2000 and Keller, 2001. As a result, military family research in the USA is prolific in comparison with the UK. Gerner and Perry (2002) looked into the effect on students when they returned 'home,' in the case of the military child, when their parent left the forces. In this instance, students felt a very real "depression" because their experiences were not understood or valued by other children. These findings were mirrored by Butcher (2002) who explored the notion of "disenfranchised grief" and a longing for belonging when returning to ones home country. Wolpert et al. (2000) listed some of the stresses which might affect a young family in the military and questioned the stress that the military family are put under when soldiers are away for long periods of time, either training or on a tour of duty, when young mothers are often living far away from their families. Rosen and Durand (2000) considered some of the more specific pressures of family life during wartime. For some parents, the difficulty of staying behind and continuing to raise children was too much and some chose to leave their army home and returned back to their family. Whilst this provided the remaining parent with support, this could disrupt the children still further.

Martin (2000:258) summed up some of the major issues facing the US Army and its serving personnel in the future. These issues are very prescient, given the recent publication of a White Paper in the UK (MOD, 2003) on the future of defence provision and the decision to downsize our own armed forces. Martin's vision of the twenty-first century armed forces, "a relatively small force ... heavily reliant on advanced technology weapon systems," would have a profound impact on family life, with the soldier serving more and more time away from home and the family moving less and less. This will certainly reduce the mobility of children and will have some positive effect on the difficulties that mobility can have on education. What remains to be seen, however, is the effect that this increased separation of parent and child will have on the raising of army children and whether this will affect their experience of education.

The military lifestyle and culture can be seen to have an effect on a child's behaviour and life skills. Price (2002) suggested that army children were better behaved as their parents had a lower threshold for bad behaviour given the military structure. Also it was highly likely that the constant moving around disrupted friendships, so that military children became more introverted. Meanwhile, the military structure placed normative constraints even on their lives. Price's research, however, was conducted on an American Army base which provides all the social and recreational facilities required, 'within the wire'. In contrast, British army children living on bases that are smaller and provide less facilities than the US versions are far more likely to leave and thus escape the 'normative constraints' of army life. Conversely, research (Jeffreys and Leitzel, 2000) has suggested that military children, in comparison to their civilian peers, may become over-responsible, may protect themselves from developing close friendships and may have a tendency to move on rather than work through problems after an argument with a friend. The notion of feeling overly responsible for the remaining parent and siblings and being seen to 'do the right thing' is also evident in McCubbin and Dahl (1976), whilst the concept of protecting themselves from developing close friendships and moving on instead of seeking to solve friendship issues in

current relationships has been echoed by Darnauer (1976) and Pollock and Van Reken (2001).

Chandler's research (cited earlier, 1991) was also borne out by Rosen and Durand (2000). They hypothesised that families either left the role of the departing parent 'open' in preparation for their return which might cause anxiety for the family, or 'closed' their place, often allowing an older child to resume the role. The returning soldier might, then, be resented on their return. In both cases it was likely that children's anxieties would be acted out at school and would affect their experience of education. Bell and Schumm (2000:143) considered in more detail how children fantasised what the reunion with their parent would be like. When the reunion did not live up to the dream there was disappointment and anger on both sides, "children can become upset and clingy." Watanabe and Jensen (2000, echoing McCubbin and Dahl, 1976) pointed out, however, that longer absences could have less effect on a child than several absences of less than one year. They also considered that absence was more difficult for younger children and sons. Jolly's theme (1987) of parents needing the close support of their children was also apparent in Keller, "close knit families provide the solid consistency in an inconsistent world" (2001: 98).

A recent survey, commissioned by the House of Commons Defence Select Committee (HMSO, September 2006) has included the view points of albeit a select group of service children for the first time. By conducting an on-line survey of teachers, parents, service children and other interested parties, the Committee reported seven major findings: firstly, that mobility could have a detrimental impact on children's emotional well-being and attainment; secondly, that fewer of the lower paid ranks of the armed forces were taking up the Boarding Schools' Allowance; thirdly, that children do suffer when their parents are on tours of duty; fourthly, that in SCE schools there were problems with governance and these schools were slow in applying DfES initiatives; fifth, the lack of availability of the precise number of service children attending state schools within the United Kingdom was considered to be poor; sixth, the transfer of school records and statements was poor; finally, the

Committee reported that there was a need for more joined-up thinking amongst education and service providers for service children.

Schools

Nicholls and Gardner (1999) assessed that the three major issues pertaining to mobility in schools were the importance of continuity and progression in teaching and learning; the need for primary and secondary schools to work closely together to deliver this; and the need to recognise and ease the tension and stress which pupils can experience during the transition period. Whilst their analysis clearly considered transition to occur during the primary/secondary transfer only and not at other times as in the case of army children these three issues present a clear way of identifying and discussing mobility in all aspects of education. In an effort to clarify the term 'transfer', it should be appreciated that the transfer between schools is an experience that every school-age child will have at some time during their life. Usually transfer takes place between the primary and secondary school. For army children, transfer takes place between schools at any stage in their school career and usually corresponds to the career posting of the serving parent. Furthermore, the difference between mobility and turbulence should be recognised. Mobility recognises that a child has made one move, whilst turbulence suggests that transfers between schools are on-going (Lewis, 2002) and are, thus, more problematic for schools. The Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) (2002a:4) however, suggested that turbulence occurred as a result of a large-scale planned move of pupils and was not indicative of the individual pupils' experiences.

Dobson and Henthorne (1999:3) on behalf of the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) also recognised the issue of mobility amongst armed forces children. The authors concluded that, "high mobility appears to be associated with particular groups – travellers, refugees, [and the] armed forces." However, the issue was not highlighted as being a problem for the individual child, but was seen as creating institutional difficulties. They asserted that highly mobile younger children could miss out on early years initiatives and that high mobility could cause major difficulties for school

target-setting. With regard to bench-marking, schools with a highly mobile population should be compared with other schools with a similarly mobile population. Schools with mobile populations were seen to have difficulties in seeking parental involvement and would probably have to spend more time making links with parents. Finally, in Education Action Zones, it was considered that targets relating to on-going funding would probably be left unmet if the school population continually changed. In the follow up consultation paper (Dobson, Henthorne and Lynas, 2000) the focus remained solely on school target setting.

The Ofsted report into the issues of mobility and education (2002a) appeared to provide a cohesive insight into the difficulties that schools have in managing mobility. The report used inspection information from the January 2000 to July 2001 period, plus evidence from five local education authorities in high mobility areas. Although the report, unfortunately, did not define what is classified as a highly mobile area. One difficulty could be seen within its introductory section, as it is stated that the report was "less concerned with large scale planned mobility rather than trickle postings" (p2). ('Trickle postings occur when pupils come and go on an individual basis, rather than 'en masse'). Planned moves were not seen as being problematic to individual schools. The report's findings considered that mobility was more of a feature in primary schools. However, Ofsted did concede that high mobility did challenge schools.

Good management of mobility was cited as being a school where:-

1. Relationships with parents were forged quickly
2. Pupils were provided with information packs about their new school
3. Schools very quickly got information on the pupil from their previous school
4. Pupils were placed in an appropriate teaching group
5. Staff discussed Schemes of Work with pupils to assess any gaps in their knowledge

6. The LA supported the school either through extra budgetary support or through forging links with other helpful agencies

Ofsted's recommendations were not particularly specific. This was especially evident in their case study of a large secondary school in the South of England with a significant army intake. In this case study it was stated that the school "worked hard to give newcomers a secure start" (p11) but it did not say exactly how this was done. The study further reported that the issue of mobility and attainment was difficult to consider:

> "the relationship between pupil mobility and attainment is complex. It is difficult to isolate the effect of pupil mobility on attainment because it often occurs alongside other factors, such as a disrupted family life. Differences in the relationship between mobility and attainment also reflect differences between schools in their ability to manage mobility effectively" (p2).

The research report was based predominantly on the experiences of schools which had a history of 'trickle postings' negating the institutional difficulties that can be faced when whole regiments move. The report estimated that the average pupil turnover at secondary level was 5.6% of pupils per academic year.

The issue of mobility and attainment has been reflected on by many researchers. Although his work focused mainly on the history of army children's education, with little analysis of the various problems, Williams (1971) did document that the issue of mobility and its effect on primary and secondary education was discussed in parliament as early as 1955. Whilst the link between mobility and attainment was recognised sixty years ago, progress to make changes in this area has been slow. Strand's survey of over 6000 civilian and service students' results (2002:63) concluded that "pupil mobility during the early years is associated with significantly lower levels of pupil attainment in reading, writing and mathematics' tests at age 7." His 'cautious interpretation' was due to finding that mobile pupils are more likely to be entitled to free school meals, rather than solely focusing on pupil mobility as the cause of these difficulties. However, this would not apply to the

children of army families, where the employment of one of the parents in the armed forces would have negated this effect on the final results. Strand's research suggested, therefore, that there could be a link between educational achievement and the number of moves an army child makes. The updated report relating to Strand's earlier work (Strand and Demie, 2006) also confirmed the link between mobility and attainment.

Marchant's (2002) analysis of assessment results in one Middle School in Dorset, near to a large army garrison, indicated that numeracy skills were in-line with the national norm, but that literacy skills "needed greater attention for the majority of service pupils." Similarly, Demie's analysis of results within one local authority (2002) also suggested that there was a difference in the English results between mobile and non-mobile pupils. Mott (2002:28) who surveyed 39 local education authorities concluded that, "the strength of the evidence suggests something more than a causal connection" between mobility and its impact on attainment. A cursory review of Key Stage Two results nationally reveals that, whilst literacy scores are slightly lower than those for numeracy, there is not the large difference in assessment scores between these two areas of study as is evident in Marchant's survey (DfES, 2004).

Unlike Strand, Galton, Grey and Rudduck's research (1999) asserted that pupils' failure to achieve after a move was caused by some of the new experiences pupils encounter at a new school, such as coping with new teachers, travelling on a new bus route and making new friends. They highlighted the relationship between the social factors of schooling and attainment by reviewing existing research and using this to focus their requests for information from individual schools and LAs.

Increasing public awareness of military issues has been recognised in the UK in numerous examples of media coverage (see earlier comment). The BBC (24/7/01) explored the issue of the army child and their education. The army parents interviewed experienced difficulties in registering their children in new schools, which might already be full. Many parents had undergone the

'appeals' process against Local Authority decisions not to accept their child into the nearest local school. Difficulties were compounded by the lateness of issuing a quarter to military personnel sometimes only two weeks before the actual moving in date so that parents could not contact local schools well in advance. These difficulties have also been recognised by the Ministry of Defence. (Service Families' Task Force [SFTF], 2004) An on-going discussion forum in the Army Families Journal (2001) has focused on schools admissions difficulties and asked for feedback and evidence of this from its readers, with a view to making policy makers aware of these difficulties.

A recent government initiative has finally recognised the difficulties parents of Army children may face when moving their child from school to school:

> "in those areas with a significant standing presence of Service personnel a Service representative ...should be invited to the admission forum. " (DfES, 2002: 38)

The provision for representation on admissions is a step in the right direction for the army, although this representation will need to be effective in order to provide real gains for service families. Furthermore, in reality, advice to LAs remains discretionary rather than compulsory, with the result that, whilst some progress has been made, some LAs still continue to ignore guidance in this area (Hutchinson, 2004). The result of admissions difficulties can be that parents feel impotent when it comes to choosing a school for their child. Many parents may take the first school on offer, going against Taylor and Woollard's comments (2003) that parents take into account a range of factors when choosing an appropriate school for their child. Indeed, army parents may have to limit their choice to the school with the 'best' prospectus as a transfer from an overseas posting can mean that families are unable to visit schools in advance or are unable to get their child into their first school of choice.

Kiddle (1999) in her work on travellers' children (explored fully below) argued that teachers must converse with traveller parents so that they can begin to understand the complexities of a travelling lifestyle. It is only from having an

awareness of the different cultural backgrounds of students that teachers can realise how best to integrate their students into their classrooms. Wolfendale (1992:30) echoed this:

> "sensitivity to individual family differences is paramount if we are all to avoid charges of, at worst, racist responses, simply because teachers and other professionals find it very difficult to be adequately informed about and understand a range of child-rearing practices and attitudes."

With regard to army parents, this theme is similarly evident in the research of Williams and Mariglia (2002:78) who commented that, "designated military support personnel should increase the awareness of teachers who are confronted with special issues associated with relocation and extended parental absences." Williams and Mariglia asserted, therefore, that the onus should be on the military to support its personnel in their careers and welfare arrangements and not for other agencies to pick up the pieces. Keller (2001:10) also recognised the lack of knowledge of education professionals:

> "many educators, in our findings, did not have mobility in their own experience and did not have personal experience with the military."

Furthermore, Keller (2001:58) also commented on the inability of army parents to make and sustain relationships which would help in their child's education concluding that, "military parents are less likely to know the 'right teachers' or develop a close relationship with a high school faculty member who knows the ropes." Keller and Decoteau (2000) suggest that representatives of the army and individual schools must come together on a regular basis to discuss their differing needs and to seek a way forward for the benefit of the students. It was apparent that, in involving the army with the day to day running of the school, there might be benefits for all children (military and civilian). This could involve allowing the school to make use of army sporting facilities or even asking soldiers to act as mentors to students. German (1996, echoed by Kiddle, 1999), writing about traveller families, considered that teachers would benefit from an interest in how individuals, families and communities actually lived in their catchment area. Not only would this be of benefit to traveller communities and other minority groups,

this could also benefit all children attending a school, especially if their teaching staff lived outside the immediate area around a school.

Central to the founding aims of the Military Child Education Coalition in the USA is the importance of the military and education providers working together to enhance the learning opportunities available to students. The MCEC/US Army Study (Keller, 2001) suggested that the most crucial time for a child, after transition, was the first two weeks at a new school and the last two weeks before leaving. Small concerns such as who to eat lunch with become major issues for a new pupil. The theme of grief at missing old friends was common (also repeated by Tyler, 2002) and was one of a range of feelings felt by the army child. Keller concluded that "when students feel overwhelmed, lost, alone, and under siege the emotional issues trump the academic transition" (p99). Keller and Decoteau (2000) described the negative response to turbulence by children as "downshifting," whereby the brain responded to a perceived threat or unpleasant experience. A whole range of situations could be listed within this category. Changing schools requires children to deal with many new experiences - new friendship groups and the day to day realities of a new school such as how to obtain a locker, finding their way around, meeting new teachers and working out a new timetable. Children might also display anxiety when a parent was sent away on a tour of duty. All of these mirror Measor and Woods' (1984) similar comments (see below).

Alderson (1993) in her small-scale Master's dissertation which focused on mid-year transfers concluded that teachers could be negative towards children who transferred at other than normal times. Teachers felt that the transfer of these children into their classes would only cause them more work. The Ministry of Defence, in spite of the growing realisation that welfare and family support is needed in order to retain experienced personnel (MOD, 2000b), has demonstrated some understanding of the issues of turbulence (SFTF, 2004). It has kept its involvement in making progress in this area to committee level by, for example, helping to establish the National Association

of State Schools for Service Children, rather than funding proactive plans of action in the area, as seen in the US Army's funding of Keller (2001).

This review of relevant literature has focused, thus far, on the effect of transition on the school and at a wider level, although Galton, Grey and Rudduck (1999), as outlined earlier, did relate the social process of schooling to lowered attainment levels. When children have been asked what affected them the most about changing schools, the results moved away from admissions, attainment and institutional worries, which have been so widely investigated and reported (for example, Eriksen, 1997) to serious social concerns. Measor and Woods (1984) conducted one of the earliest surveys of childhood experiences and compared the formal and informal passage into school. They gave examples of formal areas as being the size of the school, the school's discipline code, whilst informal considerations included bullying and losing friends. Army children, like all children, could adapt over time to the formal considerations of schooling. However, without insider knowledge such as having an elder sibling who already attended the school or a neighbour with children at the school they would never be able to prepare fully for the informal aspects of schooling. This might put them at a disadvantage in comparison to children transferring to schools within the same catchment area, as their families already have an acquaintance with and an understanding of the school.

Greenhalgh (2004) commented that understanding the formation of groups was extremely important since these promoted positive interaction. Membership of a peer group or a particular class at school could be seen as part of this. Greenhalgh felt that mobility was a significant threat to group interaction, since the new child will take time to fit in and understand their place within the group, whilst the arrival of a newcomer could affect the existing group dynamics and create upheaval for everyone. The need for stability in teaching/learning relationships, as a means of getting the best out of a student, was argued against by Bressoux and Bianco (2004). In their French context, they concluded that teacher effects on pupils' learning gains wore off over time, so that the 'immediate' teacher effects on learning should

be seen as more important. In other words, stable and long-term relationships were not necessary for positive and fruitful learning experiences. On the other hand, however, positive home/school relationships leading to increased pupil and parental participation in schooling and, ultimately, better school experiences could only evolve through dialogue between teachers, pupils and parents (Beveridge, 2004). As a result, transient army children may suggest their own ways of improving their experiences but these may not be the same as other army children coming before or after them.

Anderson et al. (2000) reviewed research covering school transitions and suggested that there were several 'groups' of children more at risk of failure following a move to another school. They comment that girls are more vulnerable at transition time. If a child has had prior problematic behaviour or is considered to be of low academic achievement, they may well experience difficulties at transition. Finally, Anderson et al. (ibid) considered the impact of socio-economic status and race. In the same way that society is not made up of a homogenous group of people, the armed forces' families come from different walks of life and different cultural and class backgrounds, all of which can have an effect on a child's attainment. Anderson et al. are contrasted by research conducted in Germany (Lohaus, Elben, Ball and Klein-Hessling, 2004) which concluded that transfer between schools was not the stressful experience that we perceive it to be, especially if that transfer is proceeded by a period of time out of school (for example a summer holiday). Lohaus et al. (2004) did conclude, however, that the older the student, the less likely they were to experience stress at school transfer. These findings were mirrored in Eriksen (1997) whose survey of 132 International School students discovered that moving school did get easier. Keson (1991) commented that this might be because students became 'numbed' to painful and re-occurring experiences over time as a way of coping with the grief.

Williams and Mariglia (2002:78) felt that an important part of the process of including military children was to allow them the space within their education to "share their life experiences with their classmates while they learn[t] about the experiences of their non-military classmates." This was seen as a

'normalising' process, whereby military and civilian cultures could begin to appreciate the 'other'. Hylmo (2002) suggested that more children's literature should feature an internationally mobile culture, in order that these experiences could be legitimised and normalised. Anderson et al. (2000) considered two points. Firstly they looked at the need to prepare a child for transition, by discussing concerns with them. Secondly they investigated the need to support the child throughout the transition process. Bridges (1996) considered the need to view transitions as endings and then beginnings. By spending time thinking through previous experiences, we can channel our energies into future experiences. Galton (2000) also put forward three factors – a review of the administrative arrangements adopted by schools, so that information can exchanged more efficiently; working to reduce pupils' anxieties; and working to ensure curricular continuity between one school and the next.

3 - GROUPS WITH SIMILAR EXPERIENCES

There has been recent research into mobility within other children's groups. Whilst these groups do not have the same educational and life experiences as army children, understanding some of the difficulties that they face may help us to understand the army child. Specifically, research focusing on the experiences of traveller children and Third Culture children (TCK) is explored in this section.

Third Culture Children

Other mobile groups include children whose parents are in the Diplomatic Service, in international business or missionaries. The experience of the 'international' child, also called 'Third Culture Kids', has been extensively researched in recent years (see Hayden and Thompson, 2001). The TCK was defined by Pollock and Van Reken (2001:6) as being raised in a "neither/nor world" – neither belonging to one culture (their country of origin) nor another (their country of domicile). Pollock and Van Reken assessed the two main issues pertaining to TCKs as being cultural identity or inability to identify with a given culture and mobility. With regard to culture, they

concluded that TCKs moulded their cultural identity to try and fit the culture that they were in, "they may be obvious foreigners one day and hidden immigrants the next" (p54). Their perception of themselves was not fixed. When it came to mobility, Pollock and Van Reken realised that this affected a TCK's ability to connect with friends. They outlined moving as a series of transitions, with each transition taking time to adjust to. As a result, some TCKs might "chronically move ... without knowing the physical or emotional comfort and stability of involvement" (p71). They commented that some TCKs failed to connect with new people for fear of losing them again when they moved on. But they stated that whilst this lifestyle might appear unbalanced to more static families, to a TCK mobility had become normal. Jordan (2002) noted that for many mobile families the 'sponsor' organisation, such as the army or the organisation that the parent worked for, took on the role of institution and extended family. In a sense the 'sponsor' became part of the family's identity. This might be especially so for army families where membership of a Regiment brings responsibility for other families and a social network of its own. Leaving the army can be a traumatic time for an army child, with their sense of identity being taken away from them.

For each of the positive experiences Pollock and Van Reken (2001) listed (see earlier), there were also challenges. An internationally mobile child might have confused loyalties, might have a more painful view of reality. For example, their experience of a war might be from the point of view of having a parent involved, rather than simply seeing it on the television. They might become ignorant of their true home culture, they might become so adaptable that they lack any cultural balance, they might become prejudiced towards people who have not lived the same lifestyle as themselves, they could consider that they have a lack of choice, with the army making the choices about where they should live etc., they could come, therefore, to mistrust authority. Pollock and Van Reken considered that these challenges led to a sense of rootlessness and restlessness. TCKs could make friends quickly but might begin to protect themselves from the pain of goodbyes by detaching themselves from true friendships. Finally, and specific to army children, if a child's parent was in the army, Pollock and Van Reken considered that they

could feel more obliged to hide their emotions, especially if they could see that their parent worked within the 'brave' culture of the army.

Pollock and Van Reken (2001) recommended several steps to improve the experience of the internationally mobile child. Many of these are pertinent to the army child. They recommended stressing to mobile families the importance of maintaining a strong family structure and getting the children to understand the nature and the role of the parent's work. In doing so children started to understand the need for their mobility. They suggested that families should work on improving their transition skills by talking about and acknowledging losses, in order to make moves easier. With regard to schooling they asserted that parents should choose the right form of schooling for their child and not make a choice based on what the majority of people in the area did. They also commented on the importance of preparing for coming home, so that the act of returning to a fixed base did not become a stressful experience for the family. Finally, Pollock and Van Reken underlined the need for sponsor organisations to bear responsibility for the whole family and consider the welfare of their employees' children.

Travellers

Traveller or gipsy children had their unique experience of education recognised in the 1960s in the Plowden Report (DES, 1967). Nearly twenty years later the Swann Report concluded that traveller children experienced difficulties in their education which threw,

> "into stark relief many of the factors which influence the education of children from other ethnic minority groups – racism, myths, stereotypes, the inappropriateness and inflexibility of the education system, and the need for better links between homes and schools and teachers and parents." (Runnymede Trust, 1985: 32)

At government level, therefore, the needs of the traveller child were beginning to be highlighted. Changes in local education funding provision meant that, from the early 1990s onwards, LAs were able to set up Traveller Education Services (TES), which provided educational welfare support for traveller families and were able to liase between travelling communities and schools.

Ofsted (1996) highlighted that a good proportion of primary age traveller children were registered at schools, but that this number significantly decreased for secondary age traveller children. Of the secondary age children registered in schools, many failed to achieve in national examinations and many were excluded due to perceived poor behaviour. The report estimated that there were as many as 50,000 traveller children in the UK, with a further 10,000 children not registered at school. As a result, governmental research (DfEE, 2000; DfES, 2003) has focused on good practice associated with encouraging school attendance in older students as well as raising attainment. This research was carried out in two secondary schools and four primary schools, so the ability to generalise the findings might be questionable.

Kiddle (1999) discussed many of the unique experiences of traveller children and assessed what factors in the education system created difficulties for them. The admissions process could create difficulties for traveller families. Often schools would be full up and families who would prefer for their children to be schooled in the same classroom would find that they were split up. Kiddle encouraged schools to reserve spaces for returning travellers, so that the lengthy admissions process did not have to be gone through time and time again. Kiddle stated that,

> "the difficulties of returning, of coming back in, even to a familiar school, is a recurring theme of teenage writers. Every class, every school has its own dynamic with which it is not easy to re-integrate" (p122).

Reynolds et al. (2003) confirmed the view that for traveller children to be fully included into secondary school life schools must review their inclusion policies and seek to understand the community that they served.

Fisher (2003) conducted an extensive review of existing literature and research when writing on traveller children from the point of view of social workers. Whilst we do not have the ability to validate the findings referred to ourselves, Fisher does present a cohesive overview of the traveller child experience in the UK, concluding that, whilst TESs provided a good link

between schools and travelling communities, traveller children did "not benefit from consistent service provision," (p28) as initiatives had not been rolled out nationwide. Similarly, initiatives at local authority level to deal with the issue of army children might not always be repeated across the country, leading to a plethora of learning experiences.

Derrington and Kendall (2004) documented the experiences of 44 secondary age traveller children in the first longitudinal study of traveller's education. They concluded that at secondary age there was a clash of cultures between the relatively 'fixed' culture of schooling and the mobility of the traveller community. The cultural clash extended further and incorporated feelings of suspicion on the part of travellers for the aims of schools and a misinterpretation, on the part of schools, of what traveller parents hoped for their children. The research also focused on traveller children's identities and how these were so different from those of the mainstream 'fixed' population. Derrington and Kendall gave the example of fighting in the playground. Whilst violence is generally not encouraged by mainstream families it is seen as an integral part of the traveller culture. As a result, this clash created mixed and confusing messages for the traveller child. Finally, Derrington and Kendall considered the under-achievement of traveller children. In their sample two thirds of the children were achieving below nationally expected standards. The researchers attributed this to the cultural and identity factors listed above and also to the issues of mobility and dropping out of school.

At first glance the experiences of traveller children and TCKs may appear to be vastly different to that of the army child. When viewing the military lifestyle as a culture distinct from the civilian culture, it becomes easier to understand how a clash of cultures, as outlined in the two cases above, can affect the educational experiences of army children. For traveller children the failure of educationalists to understand their unique way of life can lead to an inability to identify with the dominant 'fixed' system. As a result the traveller child fails to achieve. For TCKs constant mobility can lead to an inability to identify with the current learning or social environment. Both are indeed possible for army children. One distinct difference between TCKs and army children, however,

comes with the hegemonic and dominant culture within which army children live, wherever they are in the world. Whilst TCKs may attend international schools and experience the range of nationalities and differences that this brings, military children are far more likely to attend SCE schools where the curriculum and overall 'ethos' is very much British. Living on an army camp can only heighten the dominant cultural experience.

4 - CONCLUSIONS

An exploration of literature reveals that there has been little research relating to the experience of education of the army child within the UK. The majority of the research in this area has focused on the experiences of army personnel and what they **perceive** to be the experiences of their children. The research coming out of the United States, obviously, has been conducted from the perspective of the American military, which has a different ethos and set of working practices to the British army.

Nevertheless, looking at some of the wider literature reveals several important themes. Looking into the background and historical perspectives reveals that, whilst the Ministry of Defence has taken an active role in expanding the schools for army children overseas, the extent of their involvement in the UK is limited, this being seen as the role of the various service providers in Britain. Furthermore MOD concerns have tended to focus on the military family, in the broadest sense, rather than specific difficulties that family members might experience. Military life can, it has been revealed, impact quite strongly on the life experiences of the children of service personnel. Meanwhile mobility continues to be viewed as an issue at institutional level, rather than affecting individuals. However schools struggle to understand the complexities of the military way of life if they do not set up dialogue with military personnel.

The literature paints an emerging picture of a distinctive culture in which these army children live and suggests that understanding this culture is the key to helping army children to progress emotionally and educationally. Research

has shown that a military lifestyle can have positive, as well as negative, effects. Military children, on the surface, can be socially more adept, can be more flexible and can seem more 'street-wise'. On the other hand, constant moving around can lead to a sense of rootlessness and a failure to connect with new people and places. The very lack of research on the army child from within the UK suggests that research in this area is long overdue.

Chapter Three - The Research Methodology

In this chapter, the researcher sets out the decisions she made relating to the research methodology. The research design is outlined and the researcher discusses sampling issues. The use of ethnography is discussed, along with an assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of this approach. The chapter continues with a discussion of the individual research methods adopted and concludes with a focus on ethical considerations and matters relating to data analysis.

1 – THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND THE RESEARCH DESIGN

At the end of chapter two, the researcher concluded that previous research into the experiences of education of army children had not involved the input of the children themselves. As a result, it was felt that the children's experiences were too often what people perceived them to be, rather than what the children had expressed themselves. A fundamental reason for undertaking this study, therefore, was a desire to develop an understanding of army children's educational experiences as they viewed them.

The research questions set out below aim to involve the army children in the research in order to understand and explain their own experiences of education. The nature of these questions, exploring people's understandings and experiences implies, according to Punch (2005:19), a qualitative approach. In order to develop an understanding of the educational experiences of army children at Secondary level, the main research question, asked:

- What is the experience of education of the army child?

The table below shows how the research sub-questions which together address the main research question were related to the research design for this study.

RESEARCH QUESTION	RESEARCH DESIGN
What are the factors that influence the experiences of education of the army child?	**Literature Review** (Chapter Two) **Documentary search** (Chapter Four)
How do army children perceive their educational experiences?	**Observations** - Within school one (Upton School), observation of the lessons of the four focus children. A visit to a second army school (Alchester) also involved the use of observations during class time. **Field Notes** – Field Notes conducted around Upton School, Upton Garrison, Alchester School and Alchester Garrison. **Interviews with children** – Four focus children based at Upton School were interviewed four times. The final interview focused on photographs the children had taken recording their experiences of school. **Group interview** – With a group of army and civilian children at Upton School.
How do other people perceive the educational experiences of army children?	**Interviews with the following 'others'**: **People with knowledge and understanding of the four focus children -** The teachers, parents and school inclusion manager of the four focus children. **Army parents with children at schools –** Telephone interviews with two parents with children at Alchester School. Group interview with a group of army parents with children at schools in Upton. **People working in schools with knowledge and understanding of issues relating to the education of army children more generally –** At Upton School, the headteacher, the school counsellor and the school bursar. At Alchester School, the deputy headteacher, a head of year and the student services manager. **People with a wider understanding of the educational experiences of army children –** the following were interviewed: Upton's Local Authority (LA) inclusion manager, Upton's LA finance manager, a representative of the army in Upton, an Army Families Federation (AFF) education representative, the Head of the Service Families Task Force (SFTF), Ministry of Defence (MOD), a Representative of the Soldiers', Sailors', Airmen and Families' Association (SSAFA), the Education Officer at the Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS), the Head of the Service Children's Education Unit (SCE) in Germany and the Head of the National Association of State Schools for Service Children (NASSSC).

Table 1 – Overview of the research design

2 – ETHNOGRAPHY

Literature alerts us to the use of ethnography as a means of understanding the world *from the point of view* of the research participants (Spindler and Spindler, 1992:73; Atkinson, Delamont and Hammersley, 1993:16; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:2). There is little evidence to suggest that British army children have been consulted before about their educational experiences (Williams, 1971; Spencer, 1976; Black, 1984; SSAFA/AFF, 2001; Hansard, 2004) so there is a gap in our knowledge and understanding of their life at school. Ethnography provides a way of getting 'into' this world and understanding more about the day to day 'existence' of these children. A second reason for the use of ethnography can be seen in the way that ethnography can help to describe and understand a particular culture (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:1; Atkinson et al., 2001:4; Goldbart and Hustler, 2005:16). Culture can be interpreted as being any group of people or system with a common set of knowledge and understanding (Faubion, 2001:43). As chapter two demonstrated, army children exist within a distinctive world. Through ethnography, the researcher gains insights into the army child's description and explanation of their school experiences. In this way, an understanding of their educational experiences can be appreciated.

Hammersley (1998:8) identified three methodological principles of ethnography: naturalism, understanding and discovery. Taking naturalism first, ethnography should be carried out only in the 'natural' environment of the individual or group of individuals being studied. Walford (2001:7) suggested placing a high value on the account of participants. In doing so, the environment of the participants is presented as authentically as possible. Secondly, ethnography requires a commitment to developing a better understanding of the social world being studied. Our understanding grows through engaging with informants (Walford, ibid) and learning what they think about their worlds. It is by doing this that we can begin to explain the meaning of the actions being observed. Hammersley (1998:2) suggested a focus on a small number of cases only in order that a deeper understanding can be gained. Finally, ethnography is committed to finding out about people, experiences and phenomena through discovery, rather than applying a pre-

decided set of hypotheses to the situation being researched. As a result, ethnographers refine their thinking and focus over the course of the research as they find out more about the situation being studied and engage repeatedly with the data.

The main research question of this study aimed to understand the experience of education of army children. The natural setting where these educational experiences were 'lived out' and where the research was primarily conducted was in the classroom, although the researcher acknowledges that other areas around school, such as the playground or corridors, also formed part of the natural setting (see section on observation on page 62 for further details about this). As such, the focus was on the school and how the four army children managed their time there. In terms of understanding, chapter two showed that our understanding of the educational experiences of army children was limited. Although the social and cultural worlds of the school and the army were known to the researcher, she did not have any experience of what it meant to be an army child. Ethnography, therefore, provided a way of exploring these children's life at school and a means of understanding their experiences through prolonged first-hand contact with them so that we can develop an understanding of their educational experiences. Data were also collected from a range of other sources, such as teachers and parents, which allowed for a nuanced picture of the school experiences of army children to be built up. Finally, by adopting a 'flexible' approach, the researcher was able to respond to the participants, taking advantage of sudden changes in the school timetable such as attending the peer supporter training for Nick and Katie (Fn 24/3). This led to a real sense of discovering what mattered in *their* lives.

3 – DEBATES AND ISSUES IN ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

The strengths of ethnography as an approach to research are, as outlined above, the way that it allows us to explore people's own perspectives and understand more about their culture (Punch, 2005:154). However, ethnography is not without its weaknesses. By seeking to *understand* the participants within their *natural* setting using a *discovery-based* research process, as ethnographic findings are usually presented descriptively,

ethnography is criticised for its imprecise measurements. Given the importance of the individuals involved, both the researcher and the participant, the research risks becoming biased and cannot be replicated. Furthermore, the reliance on individual perspectives can be constrained by the limits of knowledge of the individuals involved. Finally, the focus is on a small sample which makes generalisation inappropriate. These issues are discussed within this section. It should be noted, however, that whilst literature (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Spencer, 2001; Robson, 2002) alerts us to several ways of assessing qualitative research (for example validity, reliability and generalisability), there is an on-going debate (Hammersley, 1992; Hammersley, 1998; Hammersley, 2002) concerning whether it is correct to apply these measures of assessment at all when considering ethnography. It might be that alternative forms of assessment such as relevance and credibility are more appropriate.

Reliability

Reliability can be defined as the expectation that "there will be consistency in results of observations made by different researchers or the same researcher over time" (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982:44). In this section, the researcher considers various means of addressing this issue including replicability, the role of the researcher and sampling. She also discusses alternative means of addressing reliability, through plausibility and credibility.

Replicability is seen as a "cornerstone" (Robson, 2002:42) of natural science, with findings of research being judged to be reliable if they have been replicated on several occasions. Spencer (2001:448), however, describes ethnography as being "so specific as to be unrepeatable." Essentially, this forms one of the major issues with ethnography – the people and events described in an ethnographic piece of research are unique so the research cannot be replicated. For example, in this study of the four focus children, only two remain at Upton School whilst the school itself has moved forward in its understanding of army children and has changed its policies and practices as a result. No other researcher, therefore, would be able to go back into Upton School and carry out the same piece of research and gain the same results. This is further complicated by the understanding and experience of

army and school life which this researcher brought to the study (see chapter one). It is unlikely that another researcher would have a similar set of background experiences which would result in a different set of interpretations. The research, then, is not replicable.

As well as the issue of replicability, a further threat to the reliability of the data can be seen in the fact that, in common with other forms of qualitative research, ethnography requires the researcher to build up a relationship with the research participants in order to be able to understand them from their point of view. In doing so, there emerges a tension between being an integral part of the research whilst remaining objective. This relates to the concept of 'going native' which refers back to early anthropological work, when researchers became such an integral part of the community that they were studying that they failed to question what was occurring in the setting (Rock, 2001:32). This can be further complicated by the fact that, in working alone, the researcher is solely in charge of gathering and interpreting data and writing up the research report. In this way, the researcher can impose their bias at all stages of the research design, through deciding how and what information to gather (Schwartz and Schwartz, 1969; Hammersley and Atkinson, 1994) as well as deciding how to present this information to others (Schostak, 2002). For many ethnographers, however, this role of the researcher, being an all important part of the research process, forms one of the strengths of ethnography (Pole and Morrison, 2003:157). It is only through engagement with research participants over an extended period of time that the ethnographer is able to find out "how [the participants] see that world, and to be able as researchers to describe how its culture ticks" (Goldbart and Hustler, 2005:16). The ethnographer, therefore, is part and parcel of the research.

In this study, the researcher took steps, suggested by Delamont (1981, cited in Burgess, 1984) and Hewitt-Taylor (2002) to overcome the issue of 'going native'. For example, the researcher made sure that the selected schools were not those where she had taught before. As a result, she entered the

schools with no first-hand knowledge and only found out more about the staff and student experience during fieldwork.

Hammersley (1992) puts forward the alternative concepts of plausibility and credibility as a means of assessing the reliability of ethnographic research. He suggests that a piece of ethnographic research should be measured against two things: knowledge of how the research was carried out and whether the research stands up to existing knowledge. Within this chapter, the researcher presents information relating to the way in which this research study was conducted. Throughout, the researcher offers information and comments to assist in making judgements about the plausibility of the research findings. Furthermore, in the literature review, the researcher looked at the experiences of armed forces children in the United States (McCubbin et al. 1976; Keller and Decoteau, 2000; Martin et al. 2000; Keller, 2001 and Ender et al. 2002) but also compared army children with Third Culture Children (Pollock and Van Reken, 2001) and Traveller children (Kiddle, 1999; Fisher, 2003 and Reynolds et al. 2003). In doing so, it was possible to compare the experiences of the children in Upton and Alchester with children with similar experiences. Whilst there were obvious differences between the groups (language issues, for example), similarities were found (such as themes of dislocation and restlessness).

Butcher (1973:2) asserts that a thorough consideration of sampling is important since we aim to "draw conclusions about a population from the information provided by a sample." In the case of ethnographic research, where the sample may be extremely small and where the aim of the research is not to provide 'generalisable' findings (Hammersley, 1992), consideration of sampling still helps to form judgements about the reliability and validity of the data (Hammersley, 1998:79).

Sampling decisions – Location

The small town of Upton was known to the researcher as her husband had been posted at the garrison six years previously. As a result, she had some contacts within the garrison which would be important when setting up the

research and exploring the context of the army. Upton School was chosen as over a third of its school population (of 374 children) came from an army background. The year before the research took place, the school's examination results were 38% grades A to C at GCSE. By reading the Ofsted reports of other schools in the locality, it was revealed that these figures were similar to those of other schools. The neighbouring secondary school was also described by Ofsted as 'small,' had one third of its population coming from an army background and achieved 34% grades A to C in examination results. This neighbouring school's intake was drawn from a garrison unknown to the researcher and this would have created difficulties when organising the parent group interview. As a result, Upton School was chosen.

There was some concern that Upton School's Ofsted inspection and subsequent placing on 'special measures' might make the Upton findings unique and incapable of being compared with other settings. As a result, the researcher approached a second school, Alchester, and negotiated a second data-collection phase with them. This was intended to compare the findings from Upton. Alchester was chosen as a second research site for two reasons. Firstly, Alchester School had a similar profile to Upton School as it was a similar size (it had 569 children on roll and was also described by Ofsted as being a 'small' school, with one third of its students which, like Upton, were from an army background) and had identical examination results (38% grades A to C at GCSE level). Although Alchester School was located within an urban community unlike Upton School, there were many similarities between the two schools. Furthermore, as Alchester was located in the East of England, compared to Upton's location in the South of England, this would permit the researcher to explore the policies and practices of a second school and local authority. Secondly, the researcher had already had some contact with Alchester School's headteacher. He had agreed to be interviewed (E13) in his capacity as Chair of the National Association of State Schools for Service Children.

Sampling decisions – The Children

The researcher worked with children in year eight only as children in years nine to eleven would be working towards external examinations (KS3 SATs or

GCSEs) during that year. Unlike children in year seven, year eight children would have had time to 'settle' into school (Galton, Grey and Rudduck, 1999) so there would be fewer factors affecting their progress at school and they would not be under any undue pressure due to external examinations. Finally, the researcher's own experiences as a Head of Year had been in the early Secondary age-range which led her to feel more comfortable working with this age group. Following the British Educational Research Association guidelines (BERA, 2004), participation was organised by conducting an informal focus group within assembly time for year eight children in which everyone was asked to share their experiences of school life. The researcher then asked if anyone would like to take part in the research, allowing children to self-select for involvement in the main body of research. Ten children submitted their names to the school's Key Stage Three Co-ordinator, Mrs B, who knew all of the children well. After discussion with Mrs B, the researcher narrowed down the list to six children who were seen to have had a range of school and home experiences and who Mrs B felt were 'robust' enough for research – that is to say, considering whether the children were shy or particularly vulnerable as neither the researcher nor Mrs B wanted to involve children who might feel intimidated or worried by interview situations.

Four focus children were decided upon for the purpose of this study. This sample was chosen for the purpose of including a range of factors and experiences within the sample which can be considered to be representative of army children but also in order to provide the depth of focus necessary for generating a good understanding of children's experiences. The researcher identified the following factors to Mrs B as being important for ensuring a range of life experiences for consideration in this study: mix of gender, the experience of having lived in an army camp abroad and the family's regimental affiliation. Regimental affiliation was an important consideration because the work of a regiment can limit where that regiment can be posted, (with heavy armoured regiments, for example, needing to be posted in areas with access to large training areas for their armoured vehicles) thus limiting the range of educational experiences of an army child. Different regimental affiliations, therefore, were sought. Life in an army camp abroad was also a

consideration as this would have necessitated experiencing education in an SCE (Service Children's Education) school.

More than four children would have provided a broader range of experiences due to a bigger group of children but the depth of knowledge might not have been so great, something described by Hammersley (1992:191) as a "trade off". Furthermore, it is unlikely whether it would have been possible to maintain equal involvement with more than four focus children given the limitations of the school timetable and the researcher's own time available for data collection. In addition, the intention was to involve the focus children's parents in the research. By limiting the focus to four children only, this involvement could be more meaningful as it allowed for strong relationships to be built up with the parents. Due to her knowledge of the children in her role as pastoral manager, Mrs B was able to identify children from the initial sample who met this range of factors. As a result, Del, William, Katie and Shelley were put forward as the first sample as they were seen to best fit the range of factors outlined above. The researcher wrote to the parents to outline the nature and the scope of the research and to obtain their consent. The letters of consent were handed to the school to forward to the parents. Of these, three parents consented to their child's involvement in the study. One parent (William's father) did not consent for his son to take part as he was due to be posted fairly shortly and did not want his son to be involved in something he could not complete. In order to maintain an equal gender split, the researcher wrote to the parents of Nick who was also on the final list and obtained their consent.

A children's group interview was set up at the end of the data collection phase in order to gauge the educational experiences of all children in the school and in turn to be able to compare whether the educational experiences of the children at the school could be due to being an army or a civilian child. This was 'advertised' by the researcher during Key Stages Three and Four assembly time and children who were interested in taking part were issued with an information letter for themselves and their parents. They were asked to get their parents to sign a consent form and then return this to Mrs B, who

collated them for the researcher. Seven children did this and all were invited to the group interview session.

Sampling decisions – Other participants

The twenty five interviews (see table one on page 45) with 'other' participants broadened the ethnographic focus of this research project. These participants can broadly be divided into four groups: firstly, people with knowledge and understanding of the four focus children, for example their parents; secondly, people working in schools with knowledge and understanding of issues relating to the education of army children more generally, for example a student services manager; thirdly, army parents with children at schools, and, fourthly, people with a wider understanding of the educational experiences of army children, such as Ministry of Defence representatives. Considering the people with first hand knowledge and understanding of the four focus children, first, the children's parents, teachers and school inclusion manager were interviewed in order to provide more understanding of and a context for the experiences of the four focus children. Within the second group, at Upton School, the headteacher, the school counsellor and the school bursar were interviewed whilst at Alchester School, the deputy headteacher, a head of year and the student services manager were interviewed. These interviews helped the researcher to understand the experiences of the four focus children as these experiences could be set against people with knowledge of other army children's experiences. In the third group, the researcher interviewed two parents with children at Alchester School by telephone and also conducted a group interview with army parents with children at schools in Upton. This group of participants helped the researcher to understand more about the role of the army parent and the difficulties they experienced with their children's education. Finally, the fourth group comprised of interviews with army personnel and related officials locally and nationally, as well as education personnel locally who would be able to comment on local and national issues and help to provide a context for understanding the experiences of the four focus children.

The decision to carry out the research at Upton School was indicative of convenience, purposive and snowballing sampling (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000:99). When it came to the selection of the focus children for involvement in the study, purposive sampling was used. For the children's group interview, the sampling was fairly open as any child who returned a consent form was invited to this. In terms of the selection of the majority of the 'other' participants, the purposive sampling used led to a greater ability to understand the context within which these four army children lived and went to school and helped to embed this within the broader national picture. For the parent group interview, however, snowball sampling was employed as this group was facilitated by a member of the army. He decided on which army personnel were to attend based on his knowledge of them (whether he knew them well enough to ask them to give up their time to attend the group) and their availability on the day of the interview. The chosen sample, however, was representative of army parents with children at schools in Upton with both primary schools and Upton School itself being represented.

Validity

Validity can be defined by the question "how well do these data represent the phenomena for which they stand?" (Punch, 2005:29) In this section, the researcher explores the debates related to validity. Forms of triangulation are discussed, as well as the issues of reflexivity, 'truth' and authenticity.

Ethnography, relying on the insight and perspectives of research participants, presents multiple pictures of 'reality'. Whilst an ethnographic researcher might strive to use the 'voice' of participants within the writing up of the research, this voice is interpreted by the researcher, through comparing what the participants say with what the researcher observes and what other people said about them. As a result, the voice of the participants becomes a "creation" of the researcher, albeit a reflection of the "deeds and words of others" (Page, 1996:80). A real concern with ethnography, therefore, is whether it is possible for a person reading an ethnographic account to be sure that they are reading an authentic version of events, or the 'truth' (Hammersley, 1998:62).

In order to counter threats to validity within this research, the researcher discussed her emerging findings and analysis with her supervisors and presented her initial findings and a discussion of her methodology at two conferences (Clifton, 2004a; Clifton 2004b). There emerges from this a sense of the "critical tradition" (Phillips, 1993: 66) whereby the claims made by the researcher are challenged and shaped by other's questioning. Furthermore, by placing in volume two of this thesis all raw data and retaining a copy of the NVIVO programme used to store and code all data, it is possible for an "audit trail" (Robson, 2002: 175) to be carried out in order to verify the authenticity of each participant's account.

'Reflexivity' can be defined as a commitment to setting out the researcher's impact on the research site and, similarly, the impact of the research site on the researcher (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:16; Lather, 1995:301; Pole and Morrison, 2003:104). In chapter one, the researcher assessed her background and previous experiences. The researcher also kept a detailed and reflective account of her fieldwork in the fieldnotes (see page 71 for further details) which set out how she felt she might be having an impact on the research setting and participants, as well as how this was challenging her own thinking. In both senses, the researcher adopted a sense of reflexivity towards the research process.

Triangulation, that is to say, employing "the use of two or more methods of data collection" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000: 112) was employed as an obvious means of countering threats to validity. Within the research design there were several examples of data-source triangulation (Robson, 2002:174; Hammersley, 1998:89). Firstly, evidence collected through interviews and in discussions with the four focus children was considered in relation to data collected through interviews with parents and teachers. Secondly, national issues pertaining to the experience of education of army children (as evidenced in the interviews with the SFTF and the NASSSC, for example) could be triangulated against the accounts of people working at a more local level (such as the LA representatives or the local army personnel). It was also possible to see technique triangulation (Hammersley and Atkinson,

1995:231) taking place. The research includes a mixture of methods (three forms of interview, field notes, documentary analysis and observation) but also a mixture of perspectives (through working with the children, their teachers, their parents and army and education personnel not directly involved with the children).

Relevance

Hammersley (1992:72) considers relevance as being one of the two major means by which ethnographic research should be assessed. Given the small number of participants and locations involved in a piece of ethnography, can it be considered to be relevant to educational research and practice more generally? Would this research be relevant to anyone not involved in educating children at either Upton or Alchester Schools (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:10; Hammersley, 1998:71)? Hammersley (1992) suggests that the appropriate way forward is to consider the contribution to knowledge that an ethnographic account can make when it is read alongside other accounts written about similar fields. The sense, therefore, is one of a "collective" body of knowledge (Hammersley, 1992:76) which, together, provides relevant knowledge and understanding to practitioners or researchers. Relating this to the present research, the research design for this piece of research has involved only a small group of army children. As the literature review in chapter two has demonstrated, this is one of the first times that army children have expressed their own views on their educational experiences. As a result, the body of knowledge about army children's educational experiences is limited. However, this research contributes to understandings gleaned from other sources of literature (see chapter two) and the conclusions (chapter eight) point towards recommendations for further research in order to lead, eventually, towards changes in policy and practice.

Generalisability

In this section, the researcher considers the issues related to the generalisability of small-scale research, such as ethnography.

In common with all forms of qualitative research, ethnography is known to be limited in its ability to generalise its findings due to the small number of cases being studied (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). This is an important consideration if a goal of research is to inform policy makers (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000:43). Hammersley (1992) however questions whether generalisability should be the aim of ethnographic research at all. Instead, the qualitative researcher's function should be to *describe* the setting and *explain* the patterns of behaviour (Schofield, 1993:92). Both Schofield (1993) and Hammersley's (1992) position in relation to the issue of generalisability resonated with this researcher. Describing and explaining the educational experiences of army children was the primary intention of this piece of research, as discussed in section one of this chapter, as these experiences had not been researched to any great extent in the past (see chapter two).

Schofield (1993) cites Guba and Lincoln's concept of "fittingness" (1982:238) as a more appropriate way forward for qualitative researchers to understand research findings in another setting. It is suggested that qualitative researchers should seek a research site that is in many ways typical of the situation being studied as well as performing a multi-site study in order to counter problems associated with generalisability. These issues were considered when planning the data collection for this piece of ethnography. The researcher spent some time considering what would make an appropriate choice of research site (see earlier section) in order to approach a school which was similar to other schools in the locality and which would 'fit' in with other army schools. Furthermore, when it became clear that Upton School's being placed under 'special measures' might make the findings unique and incapable of being understood within other settings, the research progressed to a second research site (Alchester) in order that research findings from Upton could be compared. Whilst a research project conducted in two schools cannot be considered to be a real 'multi-site study' (Bogdan and Bliklen, 1982:65), the data collected from Alchester did suggest that the initial findings from Upton could be understood within the context of another army school.

In the design for this research there were many elements which, together, demonstrate how the findings might be understood beyond the situation of Upton alone. First of all, through the use of the children's group interview, the researcher gathered data which confirmed the information provided by the four focus children. Through the use of various forms of triangulation (see earlier discussion) by comparing the children's responses with what other people said about them (their teachers and parents) and with what they said about themselves in the different forms of interview (one to one interview and photo-elicitation interview) it was also possible to place greater validity and reliability on their perspectives. Finally, by involving participants who were able to comment on the national picture of army children's education, the stories of the four focus children were not seen to be unusual. The researcher suggests, therefore, that, when the findings relating to the educational experiences of the focus children are triangulated alongside contextual information about the focus children (provided by their parents and teachers) and about army children more generally (provided by people with a national interest in army children's education), these findings can be understood in, or are likely to 'fit', other army schools. The findings relating to the focus children alone cannot be generalised to the whole army child population, however.

4 – DATA COLLECTION

The table in section one of this chapter links the research questions with each data collection strategy so that it is clear how each question was addressed during the course of the research. The research sought to understand the educational world from the army child's perspective, studying them within their natural settings in order to understand what meanings they attach to their lives in schools. This search for understanding can be seen as the link between the research questions and the research design. The research design, therefore, focuses on the individual and the individual's interpretation of their life and experiences, making use of data collection strategies such as interview, observations, field notes and documentary analysis.

A data collection time line can be seen on page 61 tracing the research from the first contact with Upton School in April 2003, through to the last day of data collection in Alchester in April 2005. This is intended to provide an overview of data collection so that the sections relating to data collection explored later can be understood within the context of the data collection schedule. Each data collection strategy is considered and decisions relating to the carrying out of data collection are discussed. A more detailed time line, outlining the dates and times of each item of collected data, can be found on page 65 of Volume Two. Furthermore, this detailed timeline outlines the researcher's rationale for each activity.

Start

30 April 2003	First contact with Upton School
15 May	Meeting with senior staff at Upton School and presentation to students
18 September	Data Collection begins at Upton: • Observations with 4 focus children in a broad range of lessons each lasting 1 hour, handwritten notes taken • Field Notes (School and Garrison) • 4 semi-structured interviews with 4 focus children, face to face and tape recorded. Interviews lasting about 20 minutes each. Photo-elicitation interview (interview 4) involving discussion of 24 photographs taken by children using disposable camera. • Semi-structured interviews with their parents, teachers and headteacher, all face to face and tape recorded. Interviews lasting about 40 minutes each. • Semi-structured interviews with other interested parties – Representatives of LA, SSAFA, AFF, CEAS, SCE, SFTF and local Army, Chair of NASSSC, School Inclusion manager, School counsellor. 3 interviews on the telephone (Finance Manager of LA, Chair of NASSSC, Head of SCE), the rest face to face. All lasting between 20 mins and 40 mins. Face to face interviews tape recorded except for interview with Head of SFTF and local army representative which were recorded with handwritten notes. Telephone interviews hand written notes taken. • 2 group interviews one with 4 army parents with children at schools in Upton and the second with 7 army and civilian students at Upton School • Attendance at AFF Conference
24 September 2004	End of Data Collection at Upton
21 January 2005	First contact with Alchester School
3 February	Meeting with senior staff at Alchester School
4 April	Data Collection begins at Alchester • Observations of 2 army students, each lesson lasting 1 hour, hand written notes taken • Field Notes (School and Garrison) • Semi-structured interviews with Deputy Headteacher, Head of Year and Student Services manager, all interviews face to face and tape recorded, all lasting about 40 minutes. Telephone discussions, lasting about 10 minutes, with the parents of the two army children observed. Telephone discussions hand written notes taken.
7 April 2005	End of Data Collection at Alchester

End

Table 2 – Timeline of data collection

Observation

Observation is considered to be the primary research method used by ethnographers (Punch, 2005:182) in that it provides the means of viewing a social world in order to begin to understand the world of others. In interview, we seek to understand the meanings that people attach to their culture (Spradley, 1980) but in order to provide us with information to support an interview we need to find out about that culture through observation first of all. Observation can be carried out in several ways, ranging from the so-called 'complete participant observation' to the 'complete observer observation' (Burgess, 1984:81). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) and Adler and Adler (1994) also consider observation to exist on a scale, in terms of the increased (or decreased) participation of the observer in the situation being observed.

Within this research project, observations were carried out during lessons over a period of twelve months at Upton School (with a further one week observation period at Alchester School) with 77 hours of observation being carried out in total. Observations took place in lessons attended by the four focus children in order to learn more about the learning experiences of these children and how they experienced school on a day to day basis. The researcher agreed with Scarth and Hammersley's (1993) comments about the use of a formal coded observation schedule. These echoed the researcher's feelings about the extent to which qualitative experiences of schooling can be observed and understood through the use of a fixed observation schedule. The researcher considers that experiences cannot be understood from a one-off snapshot in time. Instead, the researcher made use of the descriptive observation technique (Spradley, 1980), describing what she saw in text format, which allowed the researcher to describe the actions that were being observed at the time, not just those that were decided upon before the observation takes place.

Spradley, however, does not suggest that it is necessary to list what participants say to each other and the researcher considered this to be one of the areas of concern within Spradley's framework. Although it was not always possible to record whole conversations verbatim, key phrases often gave an insight into the lived realities of the people being observed. A second concern with Spradley's guidance was the sense of restrictiveness that an observation schedule (albeit a descriptive observation schedule) placed on the observer. Therefore, it should be

noted that, whilst Spradley gave a guideline for the researcher, this was not interpreted as being prescriptive. For example, having observed in a classroom once, the researcher did not describe the arrangement of the furniture on subsequent occasions unless this had changed. The observations, therefore, were flexible and responded to the participants and their surroundings, describing what they were doing and how they connected with teachers and peers.

Goetz and Lecompte (1984:109) describe how observers should live "as much as possible with and in the same manner as the individuals being investigated." This was an aspect of observation with which the researcher did not agree. Thinking specifically about schools, children exist within the realities they create in their classrooms and in their free time such as break time or lunch break etc. It was decided to limit observations to class times only. Break times present an opportunity for children to interact away from teaching staff and other adults. Although the researcher acknowledges that observations in the playground present a real possibility of collecting rich data, the researcher considers observations during these times as an imposition on the participants' privacy (Adler and Adler, 1994). Unless the participants were in conversation with her leading out of a lesson, she did not follow them into the playground. Furthermore, the use of a video camera, absenting oneself from the classroom situation and watching the children and teachers from a remote setting were never a consideration for the researcher. This presented ethical questions which the researcher was not willing to address – for example, would it be right to observe a situation without the full knowledge, and consent, of the participants? Remote observation was not considered as it would have placed the researcher in a dominant and powerful position.

Ball's warning (1993:34) that "the claim that non-participant observation has been achieved in ethnographic fieldwork is suspect" resounded with the researcher. From her own experience as a teacher, she realised that any newcomer would have an effect on a classroom. The presence of another body, albeit a passive one, in a classroom changes the way that children may act and teachers may teach. The researcher considered that a more truthful description of her role within the classroom was something akin to 'participant observer,' acknowledging that her presence was recognised by children and teachers alike and hoping that, over the course of time, the implications of this would be lessened.

Interviews

Interviews are an important part of qualitative data collection as they provide a means of finding out from the participants themselves what meanings and understandings they attach to their experiences and surroundings (Jones, 1985:46, cited in Punch, 2005:168). In a similar way to observation (see previous section), interviews can take a number of forms, ranging from a highly-structured interview with a pre-decided list of questions and response categories to unstructured interviews whereby the interviewer allows the participant to guide the nature and the course of the interview (Fontana and Frey, 1994). Three forms of interview were employed during this research project with 45 interviews of between 20 minutes to one hour in length being carried out – one-to-one interview and group interviews (Fontana and Frey, 1994) and the photo-elicitation interviews (Banks, 2001). This section explores all three forms in turn.

One to One Interviews

Burgess (1984), Goetz and Lecompte (1984) and Fontana and Frey (1994) outline an unstructured form of one to one interview whereby the interviewer considers general themes that he/she wishes to talk about before he/she goes into the interview. However, the order in which those themes are addressed and the way that the themes are worded is left to the interviewer within each interview situation, in order to reflect the needs of the various participants. Burgess (1984:108) calls this form of semi-structured interview, with an 'agenda,' the "aide-mémoire" interview. It is Burgess' definition of 'aide-memoire' which resonated most within this research. Before every interview the researcher's intention was to define the themes of the interview that she wanted to explore but these were neither prescriptive nor fixed. The researcher carried out three 'straightforward' one to one interviews with the focus children (the fourth being based around photography). For the first interview the researcher considered the participant's background so that an overview of their time before coming to Upton could be gathered. The second interview focused on the participants' experiences of education at Upton specifically but also their previous schools. The third interview focused on the participants' relationship with the army and their home life.

The intention behind the interview technique was one of 'democratic participation' whereby interviewees could lead the discussion within the interviewer's chosen area of reflection. Similarly, Walford (2007:153) describes the concept of 'framing'

of interviews as the "degree of control that the interviewer and interviewee possess" and demonstrates how the ethnographic interview can involve a 'give and take' relationship between the interviewer and interviewee. The choice of interview themes was intended to provide information to allow the researcher access to the children's school experiences more generally but, then, access to their life experiences more specifically. As a result, it was possible to put forward an understanding of how the children's school experiences were moulded by their life outside school.

In the table on page 45, the researcher outlined 'other' participants who were interviewed during the course of this research. As these participants were interviewed once only, it was necessary to gather sufficient evidence from this one meeting. These interviews, then, were much broader ranging in their discussions than the focused interviews with the focus children. At each interview, the researcher's intention was to guide the interviewee to answer questions relating to their own experience of working with / knowing army children, as well as their opinion on the wider issues relating to army children's education.

Cooper and McIntyre (1996:25) outline the concept of "shared experience" as a means to successful interviewing, particularly when trying to elicit information from children. The researcher found the measure useful when interviewing all the participants in this study. By observing the focus children in lessons for some time before conducting interviews, not only did the researcher feel that the participants were more used to her presence, but the researcher also had material with which to prompt the participants in interview. The 'shared experience' of teaching and life in the army was also useful when interviewing the 'other' participants.

Group Interviews

Two group interviews were conducted as part of the data collection process (one with a group of seven children and one with a group of four army parents who were all serving personnel). The group interview with the army and civilian children at Upton School aimed to gauge the educational experiences of all children in the school and was used to discover whether the educational experiences of the children at the school could be due to being an army or a civilian child. Questions focused on their perceptions of life at Upton School and

in Upton town, as well as finding out about the children's previous educational experiences. The group interview with army parents aimed to provide further insights into the difficulties they experienced with their children's education and assist in understanding the army child's educational experiences in a wider context. Questions focused on their children's range of educational experiences and how the parents had negotiated any difficulties they might have had. In both instances a group interview was felt to be more appropriate than interviewing people individually. This was because the groups were not known to the researcher and she did not have time to build up a trusting relationship with those involved. As a result it was considered more supportive for those in the group interviews if they could be interviewed with others alongside them.

The group interviews generated data which backed up themes already emerging from the focus children, teacher and parent interviews and observations. This helped to both consolidate and validate other data collected. As the consistency and accuracy of their reported knowledge was important in establishing the validity of earlier data, Wragg's assertion (1984:186) that participants in a group interview "will correct each other on points of detail until a consensus is established" was significant. For example, in the parent group interview (P5) the parents all agreed that the regiment was a good source of knowledge about local schools until one soldier pointed out that his job entailed moving between regiments so he could not rely on this knowledge. At this point the parents seemed to accept that other forms of information might be necessary.

Photo-elicitation interview

Turning now to the photo-elicitation interview, the researcher gave each child a disposable camera and ask them to take photographs which would depict their life at school, in much the same way as an essay on the same subject would. After the photographs were developed, the researcher asked the children to describe what was going on in each photograph and why the participants felt that this was important. Emmison and Smith (2000:36) describe the process of asking research participants to take photographs and then to analyse the contents as "auto-photography."

One of the strengths of this particular research method is considered to be that, in asking participants to take photographs, the researcher is given access to what

the participants themselves consider to be important (Harper, 2000) thus echoing the features of ethnographic research put forward in section two of this chapter. Indeed, in the interviews, the discussion revolved as much around home and family life as school life due to the number of photographs taken within the home setting. As a result, the researcher was able to access the focus children's thoughts and feelings about the relationship between school and home life.

Photo-elicitation presents the researcher with several more points in its favour. Banks (2001) and Schwartz (1989) consider that, when working with children, basing interviews around their own photographs can provide a valuable 'prop' within which interviews can be structured. Pink (2001:44) comments that photography as a 'shared experience' can prevent ethnography becoming a "hit and run" act (Collins, 1998) whereby researchers may insufficiently probe the participants' points of view. In both these examples photography can present the researcher with an opportunity to give 'control' back to the participants. As the issue of dependency was considered to be a defining aspect of the army child's existence the sense of giving them back the power to determine their involvement in the research process (hooks, 1989) was an important intention of the researcher.

There are several issues salient to the use of photography within ethnography. Prosser (2005:136) asserts that "cameras may incite suspicion and discourage naturalistic behaviour." Indeed, in the same way that the presence of a video camera in a classroom may have influenced the behaviour of the children being observed, so might the presence of a camera. However, the researcher felt that a camera in the hand of children attending the school is different to the use of a camera by a researcher. Whilst it is acknowledged that there may have been some changes in the setting due to the children having cameras, these changes were probably less pronounced than if the researcher had decided to photograph the children herself.

Bolton, Pole and Mizen (2001:513) echo Prosser's concern, in that, when using photographs generated by other people, we, as researchers, are subject to the "fallibility and selectivity" (also raised in Prosser and Schwarz, 1998) of the photographer. Ball and Smith (2001) describe this as a question of the 'reality' of photographs. Without reference to other data sources for example, interviews

with the children or observations, the researcher could, as Bolton, Pole and Mizen surmise (2001:514) "miss the big[ger] picture." The researcher acknowledges that, had the photo-elicitation interview been taken by itself, the data emerging from the interview might have been unreliable. However, the photo-elicitation interview came at the end of a long period of observation and interviews and, in this sense, the data was clearly triangulated not just from other methods but also other people's perspectives. The following themes were triangulated most obviously by the photo-elicitation interviews: the transience of friendships (K4, S4), loyalty (K4) fear (S4, N4), the normalising of army life (K4, S4, N4, D4) and the neutralising of pain (N4). Similarly, Ball and Smith (2001:312) comment that it is the contextual detail provided by the ethnographer that makes the "images intelligible." In the photo-elicitation interview, however, it was the contextual detail provided by the children themselves that helped the researcher to make sense of the images.

Issues to be aware of when interviewing

An interview conducted as part of an ethnography can, realistically, use any of the techniques listed above. For Sherman Heyl (1994:369) what distinguishes the ethnographic interview from any other form of interviewing is the time the ethnographer uses to "develop respectful on-going relationships" with the participants. Spradley (1979:79) describes this in a similar way as part of the "rapport process" between the researcher and the participant. In the case of the four focus children interviews and their teachers, the ability to build up a 'rapport' was straightforward due to the frequency with which the researcher spent time with both staff and children alike in lessons. However, for all other participants, the ability to build up an 'on-going relationship' was difficult given that the interview itself was often the first real meeting between the participants and the researcher. Therefore, the researcher paid heed to Spradley (1979) and Sherman Heyl (1994) who focused on the need for the researcher to listen to and respect research participants in an interview situation. Furthermore, the researcher felt that Spradley's concept of 'rapport' did not fully encompass her experiences within this research project. Feeling that it was too limiting, she extended the concept to incorporate any contact made with the participants (by telephone or letter) in setting up or concluding the interview, so that participants were treated with respect before, during and after their meeting with the researcher.

Lofland (1971) and Burgess (1984) caution researchers about their choice of language in interviews, reminding them that the words they use must fit the setting and the participants. However, the researcher felt that this was not entirely appropriate to her. Given the researcher's knowledge and understanding of the world of the school and the world of the army (see chapter one) she had experience of talking with people in these worlds and knew what language would be appropriate. Another of the issues that Lofland outlines which an interviewer must overcome is how they should present themselves to the participant – within educational research, should the researcher be seen as another teacher or as a researcher? For children in a school, presenting oneself as another teacher might make them hold back on the information that they might give. For teachers, talking to a relatively impersonal researcher might prevent them from feeling comfortable about speaking out. With this in mind, the researcher decided to take an 'honest' approach with all interviewees and made it clear to children and adults alike her interest in the research subject and her own background before conducting an interview. In this way, she did not present herself in any particular way to the participants but allowed them to interpret for themselves how they wanted to view her.

Scheurich (1997) advises the interviewer to pay attention to the way that they report their findings and to consider conducting a follow-up interview to allow participants to view the transcript of the first interview and make comments on this. This advice was partly followed by the researcher in that she transcribed each interview within three days of the interview taking place and offered a copy of this transcription to all participants. All but one participant declined to see a copy of the transcript, however. The researcher suspects that this was down to two reasons. Firstly, all participants were busy people and reading a transcript of an interview was probably way down on their long list of priorities! However, secondly, the researcher wonders whether her open attitude towards all participants (in that she gave her contact details to anyone she interviewed and always wrote to them afterwards to thank them for their time) may have made them more 'trusting' of the outcome of the interview. In the case of the one participant who wanted to see a copy of the transcript, the researcher emailed this to her but she did not make any changes to the content of the transcript. The issue of what to capture and what not to capture in the transcript is also explored by Measor and Woods (1991:73) who describe one of the "blockages" of

qualitative research as being the interview's inability to present non-verbal communication in order to access the full range of a person's emotions. With this in mind, the researcher reflected on each interview after it took place and made notes in the field notes if any issues presented themselves.

With regard to group interviews specifically, the clear issue for Fontana and Frey (1994) was that one person may dominate the discussion. Furthermore, quieter members of the group will need to be encouraged to participate and, in order for the interview to be successful, the researcher has to make sure that they obtain a response from all members. In the parent group interview particularly (P5), two participants were more dominant. In this instance, the researcher made a point of bringing the quieter members of the group into the discussion and asking for their opinions.

One critical issue which the researcher had to address and which was not confronted in any of the literature that she consulted was the issue of where to hold all of the interviews. For adult participants, the choice of location was often made by participants with interviews being conducted, for example, in the parents' home, in a teacher's own classroom or in the office of other participants. The issue of where to hold the focus children's interviews and the children group interview was problematic. At Upton School there were no private areas for children such as a year group common room. As a result, the researcher had to depend on the use of teachers' offices or empty classrooms – although she insisted that any interview location should have a glass door or window so that members of staff could see in and the children could see out, thus providing a level of protection both for the children and the researcher. Alderson and Morrow (2004:52) only go as far as cautioning the interviewer to choose a "quiet, comfortable, private place," in which to conduct interviews which does not address the issue of what meanings that place might have for the children involved. Within this research, the researcher was offered the use of the headteacher's office as well as the Key Stage Four co-ordinator's office for the interviews. The researcher's concern was that the offices of senior members of staff would present many of the power issues that Hatcher (1995) outlines and, in doing so, might make the children feel intimidated and might prevent them from saying what they wanted to say. At first glance, these offices might have had negative connotations for these children. It emerged that the headteacher's office was

newly instated that year and none of the children had been invited in to see the headteacher and the Key Stage Four co-ordinator assured the researcher that he did not involve himself in the pastoral issues of Key Stage Three children. As a result, the focus children would not have viewed the location of the interviews with any great concern. To put their minds further at rest, however, the researcher reminded all of the children that they could terminate the interviews at any time for any reason.

Field Notes

Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000) suggest that field notes are a very particular form of observation. Notes were made by the researcher across the course of the twelve months of data collection in Upton School and one week at Alchester School. The field notes were seen in a very similar way to Spradley's multi-purpose tool (1980) and were used in three ways. Firstly, the researcher's intention was to comment on and make mental notes about issues arising during the research process, similar to that of Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2001). As a result within the field notes there emerged initial thinking and analysis from within the data collection phase. Secondly, the researcher used the field notes to reflect on her role within the setting and to outline how she maintained a positive rapport with the participants. The field notes became a reflexive tool (see page 56 for further details). Finally, within the field notes, the researcher recorded observations of life beyond the classrooms around the schools and in the staff-rooms and were a way of recording the 'ethos' of the settings and were, as such, a means of understanding more about the detail of the schools' culture (Emerson et al. 1995, cited in Silverman, 2005:174).

The researcher's use of field notes, therefore, differed from lesson observations as they were less formal and structured becoming, at one and the same time, commentary, diary and analysis of the data collection phase. In addition, there were often times when, on the drive home for example, the researcher was struck by something that she had seen that day, so pulled over to write down further field notes. As a result, the document was written both at the time that events occurred and shortly afterwards.

Documentary Search

Robson (2002: 351) outlines the many forms of documents available to the researcher. Pole and Morrison (2003:48) describe these as "secondary data sources" (as opposed to the primary sources of data gathered by interviewing and observing the research participants) and suggest that they can tell us a lot about the participants themselves and context within which these documents were created. In this way, the researcher can become "sensitized" to important themes (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:161).

A range of documents were collected during this research project. At the level of the children, the researcher was allowed to have copies of the children's previous school reports, as well as access to the children's school books. This provided the researcher with a means of understanding more about the children's experiences before coming to Upton. At school level, documentation included Ofsted reports for Upton and Alchester Schools and all of the schools that the focus children had previously attended, as well as school prospectuses. The researcher was allowed to see copies of the minutes of school meetings if she asked. This provided contextual information which helped the researcher to understand what was happening within the two schools. At a local level, the researcher accessed, on a monthly basis, Upton Garrison's newsletter which was available on-line. As well as this, she regularly viewed various garrison and local council websites for Upton and Alchester and, from these, was able to access neighbourhood information such as neighbourhood statistics and action plans. This local information provided the researcher with the contextual background data in terms of living in an army community. Finally, nationally, information available included copies of the Army Families Journal, copies of speeches made at the Army Families Federation Conference, access to Service Families Task Force documentation available on-line, copies of debates concerning service families in the House of Commons and various documents relating to the provision of education of service children downloaded from the SCE and CEAS websites. This national information put into perspective the information gathered in Upton and Alchester. In this way it was possible to compare the situations in Upton and Alchester with the national picture, in order to assess whether there were any similarities or differences.

Corbetta (2003:287) outlines the advantages of using documentation. He considers that documentary research can be called "non-reactive" in that the study of documents will have no effect on the setting being researched. Whilst it is true that the actual reading of a document does not present any problems to the researcher or the people in the research setting, the researcher wonders to what extent documents are entirely non-reactive? Access to documentation, an issue mentioned by few educational researchers, can be problematic in itself. Burgess (1984) describes his time as a teacher-researcher and how over time he negotiated access to school documentation. When documentation is not readily available to members of the public, this is a real concern for the researcher. Within the course of this research, the researcher was given a 'carte blanche' access to documentation. However, although the administration staff involved in collating the information for the researcher never asked specifically why she wanted to see it, this must have formed part of their reaction to her. To describe the use of documentation as non-reactive, therefore, is, perhaps, too simplistic.

A second issue was the 'completeness' of documents made available to the researcher. Amongst the documents studied, there was often a sense of important items missing or not being suitable with regard to the army children. The researcher first became aware of this when looking at the children's files (Fn 8/12 and 24/3) which showed large periods of time to be missing. With this in mind, she applied this awareness to other documentation so that documents were assessed in terms of their 'completeness'.

One of the major issues to be addressed when using documentation concerns the validity of the documents viewed. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000:147) comment that one of the benefits of documentary analysis is that the documents are "factual." However, to suggest that a document is entirely factual fails to take into account the multiple meanings contained within one document (Hodder, 1994). Documents may well be more factual than an individual's own accounts, since one supposes that multiple voices have come together to create a document. For example, in schools, behaviour policies should be created through dialogue between governors, headteachers and teachers (DfE, 1994).

4 – ANALYSIS

Data analysis is commonly agreed to mean the organisation and arranging of data, searching for patterns and discovering what is important in the data and deciding what information will be presented to other people (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982:145; Punch, 2005:194). In ethnographic analysis this may happen both in the field in order to refine data collection and after the researcher has left the field. Consideration should also be given to the way that the ethnographer writes up the account as the ethnographer must decide how to reconstruct the culture that they have researched (Atkinson and Delamont, 2005:834). Whilst this approach ensures that the research remains discovery-based (see page 46 for details) with the findings and meanings emerging from the participants, the role and involvement of the researcher could be a potential weakness. Similar to the issue of researcher bias outlined on page 49, the researcher makes decisions on 'where to go' with the research and cannot guarantee that the intuition they have about a particular issue is the one that presents an authentic analysis of the events being observed (Miles, 1979:591, as cited in Punch, 2005:195). In section three of this chapter, the researcher addressed the use of reflexivity as a means of raising a researcher's awareness to their effect on the research process. Reflexivity is seen by many ethnographers as being a means of examining their role and impact on the whole of the research process, including the analysis and writing up phase (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:16; Brewer, 2000:126; Pole and Morrison, 2003:103).

In order to prepare for the organisation of data collection and analysis, the researcher attended an NVIVO training programme. This course outlined the use of this software package as a means of storing, coding and analysing qualitative data. The researcher was interested in this package as a way of storing the vast quantities of data generated in her study (Huberman and Miles, 1994). Following her experiences at MA level, the researcher realised that being able to access information quickly and easily would aid analysis and the eventual writing-up process. Gibbs (2002:13) and Rath (2002:194) caution users of computer assisted data analysis programmes against thinking that the programmes will somehow do the 'thinking' for the researcher. Indeed, Rath is concerned that programmes such as NVIVO might "serve to restrict complexity." Could it be that the very speed and efficiency the researcher sought to achieve in the analysis process threatened vital thinking time? The researcher considers that this would

have been the case if analysis had been a one-off task. The researcher maintained that NVIVO should remain a tool to *enable* the research, rather than a means of conducting analysis. As the section below shows, analysis was an on-going process which could not be made less complex through the use of NVIVO but which was made more efficient through the storage and organisation of data.

Analysis in Field

Nias' technique (1991) of categorising and analysing interview material resounded with this researcher. Similarly, the researcher reviewed each interview and read through observation and field notes after each day spent in school. When transcribing, she considered the detail of what was being said in interviews or what she had seen in observations, as such patterns started to emerge. These thematic patterns were then incorporated into subsequent interviews and observations. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:205) consider this iterative engagement with the data to be indicative of "grounded theorising" attributing this to Glaser and Strauss (1967). Whilst data-analysis in field emerged for this researcher out of a practical decision (to transcribe data shortly after it had been collected), the researcher soon saw how beneficial this was for promoting further thinking and guiding future data collection. Examples of the way that data collection fed into later data collection can be seen in the researcher's field notes (see from page 296 of Volume Two). For example, an early theme to come out of data collection and be reflected back into subsequent interviews concerned the friendships of army boys at school which arose after a meeting with some students one breaktime (Fn 30/9).

Documents examined during the course of data collection were also part of this in-field analysis. A lot of documentation relating to the local and national contexts were incorporated into chapter four. However, information specific to the four focus children was noted in the field notes and was incorporated into the thinking about early themes and reflected back into the data collection. An example of this concerned the information gained from viewing the four focus children's school files (Fns 8/12 and 24/3). This led to an exploration of the theme of missing work and the incidence of special needs in army children (incorporated into chapter six).

Analysis after data collection

After data collection, the next stage of analysis involved a focus on the four focus children. As the research design had included 'other' participants, this analytical focus on the children brought the children back to the centre of the research. All subsequent coding and analysis were compared to the focus children so that a greater understanding of their stories and their experiences could be found. NVIVO allowed the researcher to code all data relating to each individual child using the 'case' function. From this, she drew up a matrix of raw information regarding the four focus children (see Volume Two, page 56). This matrix was used to ask further questions about the focus children in order to be able to explain their educational experiences. The questions and answers are evident on the matrix sheet. This matrix was used to generate a within-case analysis of each child which is evident in the stories of the four children involved in the research (see Volume Two, from page 3) and a within-case analysis in section three of chapter five. These stories were constructed using the observations of the children in class, their interviews, field notes, their parents' interviews and interviews with their teachers. The second stage of analysis involving the children alone involved a comparing the stories of the four focus children. Again, using the matrix (described above) it was possible to view the children's individual responses to questions. The differences and similarities in these responses were brought together in a cross-case analysis in section two of chapter five.

For the following stage of data analysis the researcher needed to move away from the individual children and start to think about generic issues emerging from the data. This involved the coding of generic individual themes, recoding into more specific themes as the researcher returned repeatedly to the data. Within NVIVO, this is known as the creation of 'nodes' into 'trees' and resembles Spradley's four stages of data analysis (1979, 1980). From page 63 in Volume Two, the researcher outlines how each of her 'node' codes fed into its overarching 'tree'. One example was the way that the focus children described with some degree of normality their army lifestyles, which was recoded into the children's life attitudes, moving into attitudes towards the army specifically and, finally, moving into the overall 'tree' of attitudes. As a result, it became possible to see themes emerging within the four focus children's stories, as well as themes emerging outside of their stories. When themes became relatively 'fixed,' themes were tested by comparing them against what various sources had said, or across various

instances in time (Woods, 1996:70). Negative cases, that is to say an issue which "does not fit the evolving model," (Bogdan and Biklen, 1982:67) were also examined. For example, unlike the mothers of Katie and Del, the mothers of Nick and Shelley coped well during their husband's absences. By examining their stories in greater detail, it was revealed that this was for different reasons – one because she had the support of the regimental wives and the other because she had the support of her nearby family. However, only in Nick's case could it be said that education was supported within the home. This was suggested to be because, unlike Shelley's mother, Nick's mother worked within the education system which gave her some understanding of how it worked. After examining negative cases, the researcher began to make relationships between the themes and wrote them into the theme outlines as evidenced in the themes presented in chapters five and six.

Issues to be aware of when analysing data

Silverman (1993) cautions users of qualitative data analysis software not to ignore non-coded data and, by doing so, ignore contrasting theories. One of the benefits of using NVIVO was that each code was given a different colour, so that text which remained un-coded could be clearly seen on the computer screen. This was referred back to when emerging themes became more fixed as a means of challenging the on-going thinking.

Banks (2001) and Pink (2001) both provide guidance on the analysis of photographs. Unfortunately, there seems to exist a bias towards the use of photographs within an international context, leading to strongly worded advice to the researcher not to make mistakes when interpreting photographs taken in other countries. The researcher should respect the context within which the photographs work and appreciate that the photographs come from another world to the researcher's own. Whilst this advice suggests an extreme within which the researcher did not work, remaining, as she did, within her own country and 'milieu' of school and army settings, nonetheless, there is much to be gained from Banks' and Pink's understanding. Pink in particular cautions on giving photographs new meanings when they are 'brought home.' In a similar way, the researcher realised that the only meaning that should be attributed to photographs were those attributed by the children themselves. In interview, the researcher presented the

photos in the same sequential order that they were taken and, during analysis, attributed to the photos themes which emerged from the ensuing discussion only.

5 – ETHICS

Skeggs (2001:435) cautions that, "a fully ethical study would mean that all ethical issues are fully resolved." Due to the involvement of human participants, with their individual needs and responses, this may not be entirely possible. However, the researcher was guided by the BERA guidelines for conducting research with human participants (2004) and Alderson and Morrow's ten topics in ethical research (2004:137) she took several steps to limit potential negative effects on all participants, but, especially, the children involved.

Risk Management

The researcher's ethical considerations review focused on potential risks to participants and the risk management strategies that the researcher had employed. The researcher considered that there were several risks to participants in being involved in the research. The army children might have felt singled out because they came from an army background. There was a possibility that they might feel uncomfortable talking about their experiences of school. If they had been unhappy at one school, the research process might have brought back some of those bad memories. They might not have felt comfortable about talking to a relative stranger. The children might inadvertently have taken a picture of a child whose parents have not given their consent to take part in the study and this might have had implications for revealing people's identities. Parents might not have felt comfortable discussing the implications of a services' lifestyle on their family.

In terms of risk management, working with army children presented particular difficulties because these children are especially vulnerable. Not only are they susceptible to the 'power relationships' (Hatcher, 1995) at play between children and adults in schools, but they are also part of the hierarchical structure of the army. The researcher was very sensitive to this given her own teaching and army background. The participants self-selected to take part in this study but it was made clear to all participants that, in line with BERA ethical guidelines (2004), they could withdraw from the study at any time, for any/no reason, and did not

need to give a reason for their withdrawal. Initial group work outlined to the four focus children the scope of the study and the methods for collecting data. Whilst it was other participants in the study (parents and teachers) who gave their consent for the research, ultimately, it was the experiences of the four focus children which were explored. This necessitated on-going discussion and negotiation with them.

Access

Organising access to a setting is another issue that relates to ethical considerations. Not only do researchers have to negotiate access to that setting but they also need to negotiate access with all individuals that they might need to consult. This can be problematic. Burgess (1984:48) defined the people giving access to a research situation as being "gatekeepers." Negotiating with gatekeepers in an educational setting involves gaining the consent of the headteacher and the individual teachers in whose classrooms the observations are carried out. This researcher's one concern with Burgess' definition of gatekeepers is that it implies that access to knowledge is granted once, at the beginning of a piece of research. However, whilst the headteachers of Upton and Alchester Schools gave their consent for observations to be carried out at the start of the research process, the researcher felt that it was necessary to ask the permission of teaching staff at the start of every lesson so that teachers could feel more like empowered research participants. In the case of one observation, permission was not granted (Fn 23/2) as the teacher was busy after the return from half-term.

Given that the research involved gaining access to many areas of school life, an information article was published within the school's newsletter. This provided parents of all the children at the school with information on the research. The researcher also sent a copy of her research proposal to the Commanding Officer of the garrison. She also met with a representative of the CEAS before data collection and they concluded that the scope of the study did not have any security implications for the service parents involved. For someone not familiar with the Military, security aspects of service life (following several decades of IRA campagins and six years of Al-Qaeda terrorism threats) cannot be played down. Finally, the researcher changed the names of all participants and research locations. In the case of the four focus children, at the end of the data collection

phase, they were asked what they would like to be called in the write-up. The names used are the names that they themselves decided upon. As a means of paying back the teachers at Upton School for the time that they had spent with the researcher during the academic year, the researcher spent a day at the school as an unpaid supply teacher at the end of the data collection phase. Similarly, the researcher led a senior management team meeting focusing on the experiences of army children at Alchester School during her time there.

Issues arising before data collection

Turning to the ethical issues presented by the chosen data collection strategies, in line with Hatcher (1995), the focus of interviews and observations was discussed with the children before they took place. Although no issues did occur during data collection, the researcher had agreed with Mrs B that, if a participant had become upset by any of the interview questions, the interview would have been terminated immediately and the child would have been taken to the member of staff who they felt the most comfortable with. The child's parents and the school's counsellor would have been informed straight away. If any participants decided to withdraw, this would have been discussed with Mrs B and an assessment would have been made as to whether the research design needed to be re-considered, or whether it might be appropriate to bring another child, self-selected from the initial focus group, into the research process. Scheurich (1997:71) comments, however, that "interviewees do not simply go along with the researcher's program ... interviewees carve out space of their own." By including a mixture of both open and closed questions, the researcher's intention was that the participants would have more scope to be able to do this and direct the interview themselves.

Other major concerns were the ethical issues to be overcome when using photography. Allan (2004:1) sums these up as "ethical dilemmas ... but also ethical pleasures." So called 'ethical pleasures' occur as this form of research method allows participants to be more involved in the research process and take control of their realities. The 'ethical dilemmas' however, cannot be ignored. The researcher sought advice from a member of the ESRC/University of Birmingham (2002) research group about the implications of children using cameras. As a result, the researcher considered her guidance to the children when they were first handed their cameras so that when the four participants were given a

disposable camera they were asked to take photos 'which would help them to tell a story of a typical school day.' Instead of telling that story in words, the children were asked to let their cameras tell the story. In line with the Birmingham group, the researcher wrote to the parents after the photographs had been developed. She sent them a set of their child's photographs and asked them if there were any photos that a) they would not like to have used in the analysis process or b) they would not like to have published in the thesis. The participants were also given the option of excluding photographs from discussion at interview. The photos were not seen as an outcome of the research. The photographs are not displayed within this thesis. To do so may have jeopardised the researcher's need to protect the identities of the participants, their families and anyone else the participants had captured in their photographs – particularly given that many of the photos depicted aspects of life at home, before and after the school day.

Issues arising during data collection

As the discussion above demonstrates, many ethical issues had to be addressed and planned for before the data collection phase of the research. However, during data collection itself, issues arose which could not be planned for and which required consideration. At her initial meeting (Fn 18/9), Mrs Hobson (Del's mother) revealed that she was an alcoholic and that Del had "a lot to deal with" at home. Essentially, this put the researcher in a very difficult position at the start of the research, should she inform the school about the information she had been told? To do so would break a confidence, not to do so might put Del at risk. The researcher decided to talk to Mrs B when she was next in school because Mrs Hobson had said that she was going to talk to school about it. Fortunately, when the researcher went into school the following week, Mrs B had already been approached by Mrs Hobson. The issue highlighted to the researcher her responsibility towards the children in the research process. Discussing Del with Mrs B might have wrecked the research design – Mrs Hobson might have decided to withdraw him from the research. Drawing on her own teaching and child protection training, the researcher realised that the safety of Del, Katie, Nick and Shelley was paramount and that this should come above the research and any data that might be collected. To protect her own integrity, the researcher gave parents the choice for the location of the interviews with their children. All parents indicated that interviews held at school were acceptable and consideration was given to the location of interviews (see page 70). The parents of children who

indicated that they would like to be involved in the main children focus group were sent an information sheet and asked to complete and return a consent form.

A further incident during data collection also required the researcher to re-consider her responsibility to the research participants. The start of the data collection phase came only a few months after the military invasion of Iraq in which many Upton based regiments were actively involved. Furthermore, seven months after the start of data collection, a battalion from Upton were deployed to Iraq for a six-month tour of duty, on peacekeeping operations. Amongst this battalion were Del and Shelley's fathers. As the time for deployment came closer, Del began to act up in class (for further details and analysis see later chapters). By the middle of data collection, Del was becoming more and more aggressive towards his classmates. In a music lesson (Fn 2/4) Del turned his aggression towards the researcher and was verbally abusive. The researcher walked out of the classroom. At the end of the lesson, Del came to find the researcher and was extremely apologetic about the way that he had behaved. He mentioned that his dad would be deploying to Iraq the following day and he was really worried about the effect that this would have on his mother. The researcher listed all of the people who were there to support him, but he commented that he didn't think that anyone would be able to understand him. The researcher again asked if Del wanted to continue with the research, to which he replied that he did. This incident actually scared the researcher as it made her realise how fragile research relationships can be and how much one depends on the good will of the participants involved.

In conclusion, this chapter has described and justified the decisions taken relating to methodology. The researcher has outlined how the research questions relate to the choice of ethnography. In addition, issues and debates relating to the use of ethnography are addressed. The chapter continued by setting out decisions taken relating to each data collection strategy. The chapter has concluded with sections addressing issues relating to data analysis and ethics.

Chapter Four - The Context of the Research

The literature review concluded that it was important to know about the culture and background experiences of army children in order to understand how to support them better in schools. This chapter presents contextual information relating to the national and local contexts in which the data were collected. This information is presented for two reasons. Firstly, by presenting this information, the distinctive world in which army children live can begin to be understood. Secondly, in order to appreciate the richness of the collected data, it is necessary to understanding the context within which they were collected. The national context has been explored using data collected from conducting a documentary search and analysis (see pages 71 and 75, for further details). Two army garrisons were visited as part of this research (see chapter four for further details), therefore, when considering the local context, information is presented about both Upton town and garrison and Alchester town and garrison. Contextual information is also presented about the range of educational facilities in Upton as well as the main research site, Upton School.

1 – THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Army families can expect support from several agencies, within and outside the army. Each regiment or battalion appoints a Welfare Officer and connected welfare personnel, to oversee the work within the regiment. These welfare officers (or Unit Welfare Officers [UWOs]) fall under the broader Army Welfare Service umbrella, but are directly responsible to the Commanding Officer of each regiment. Within regiments, soldiers are broadly organised along the lines of rank into Messes. Generally, each regiment has an Officers' Mess, a Warrant Officers' and Sargeants' Mess and a Junior Non-Commissioned Officers' Mess. The Mess provides accommodation and food for single personnel, as well as a meeting place and a social venue for all personnel of that rank. As such, a Mess provides un-official support for soldiers and officers, from the 'horizontal' support of one's peer group. A vertical support network exists within each regiment, which is broken down into sub-units. Within Cavalry regiments, this is known as a Squadron, whilst in Infantry regiments, this is known as a Company. Further support can be offered at a very individual level from the Troop (which makes up the Squadron) and the Platoon (which makes up the Company). This support can

exist in many forms. It may be that soldiers have difficulties which they wish to talk through with their superior. Issues would then be passed up through the army's Chain of Command, until they reach a level which is sufficient to bring about change. These issues might concern family issues as well as issues to do with their child's education.

Army families are offered housing in houses (or quarters) owned by the Ministry of Defence. These are provided with a low rent in order to off-set the difficulties of buying a house or finding a lodging at each posting. Quarters are run and maintained by the Defence Housing Executive (DHE) and are allocated according to rank (for officers) and family size (for soldiers). Soldiers and officers houses are often located at different parts of an estate. The issue of family size is contentious. A family is defined in terms of the soldier, his/her legally married spouse and their dependant children. A dependant child is defined as being a legitimate child or step-child below the age of 18. If the child is above 18, then they must be below 25 years of age, unmarried and in full-time education. If this is not the case then the child is not considered as part of the family structure, so they will not be allocated a bedroom of their own. Both the issue of keeping families together and the issue of qualifying for housing only if the soldier and spouse are actually married have been debated within the Army Families Journal.

Recent changes in Ministry of Defence policy (MOD, 2003 and 2004a) will impact on the experience of life in the army for dependants. For families, a significant change will be the phasing out of the infantry Arms Plot, (the plan which sets out which regiments should move where and when) which means that regiments will remain in their locations for longer and families will gain greater stability. The overall numbers in the Army will be reduced to 102,000 by 2008 – a reduction of 1500 from the currently funded level of 103,500. Some regiments will be disbanded whilst others will be merged. The Army expects to find these reductions in general from natural wastage, and redundancies should not involve more than a few hundred personnel. It can be seen that, whilst army families may gain greater stability, it is highly likely that the changes will see the serving member of the army spending increasing amounts of time away from home.

The Service Families Task Force (SFTF) was created in 1998 following the Strategic Defence Review (MOD, 1998) in order to address the problems caused

by Service families' mobility that were not within the Ministry of Defence's control – for example admissions to schools and access to an NHS dentist. The SFTF does not deal with an individual's issues but works towards ameliorating problems that families from any of the three services might have. In January 2003, the SFTF, after consultation with the SCE, published a School Liaison Policy (updated in 2004), setting out the responsibilities that members of the army, local schools and national policy makers had towards maintaining good links with each other, in order to:

> "establish a working structure to assist Service families to meet their aspirations for the education of their school age children" (SFTF, 2004: 1).

The Army formally acknowledged the need to recognise general welfare issues in 2000. In the foreword to the Armed Forces Overarching Personnel Strategy (MOD, 2000a), it was commented that, "people are the single most important aspect of our operational capability" (in Foreword). It was realised that soldiers would not be able to go off to work to the best of their ability if their homes and families were not being supported in their absence. Education and schooling, however, were viewed as a "soft issue," and were relegated to becoming a "future target" of the Ministry of Defence (Chapter 1 – Challenges for the Future). When the army was approached about this research, they commented that the army's primary concern regarding the army child remained, "issues of organisation and process," (personal letter, 19/11/02) rather than issues of the social process of learning.

Whilst schools within the UK fall under the control of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), schools in Germany, Cyprus and other overseas army postings, come under the control of Service Children's Education (SCE), funded by the Ministry of Defence. The SCE was founded in 1969 to co-ordinate the education of service children overseas and to establish links with the Department for Education and Local Education Authorities back in the United Kingdom. In 2004, the SCE was divided into two separate organisations in order to reflect the changing nature of its work. The SCE organisation maintains its aim "to sustain an effective education service overseas which is comparable to sound practice in the UK," (MOD, 2000c:1-2) whilst the Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) offers advice and support to service parents in the UK. The organisations maintain only approximate figures for the children that they serve. It is estimated

that there are 85,000 service children attending schools in the UK, 12,000 children attending SCE schools overseas, 1,000 children attending schools in extra command areas (i.e areas not covered by the SCE) and, finally, 8,000 children attending boarding schools and claiming BSA from the MOD. The very aim of the SCE is difficult to identify, since the language it uses is not clarified within its policy publication (MOD, 2000c). For example, the MOD does not define what it means by making the SCE "comparable" to "sound" practice.

Nonetheless, the 2000 Joint Service document sets out guidelines for sound practice covering all aspects of a child's education, including special education needs, transport and boarding facilities overseas. Whilst this is the most up to date document available for the SCE, it does not cover changes introduced by Curriculum 2000 (DfEE, 1998, 1999) nor the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (HMSO, 2001). This highlights whether the SCE does offer a level of education comparable with the UK. Indeed the SCE stated that it did not maintain special schools overseas, although there are special education units attached to some SCE primary schools in Germany. These would, obviously, not cover students in the secondary sector. Average class sizes were, however, below the average level for the same age group in the UK. The 2000 document recognised that service children were different to their civilian peers and advised service schools to allow military children time out of school when the head of the household returned after a long tour of duty. Failure to attend school is seen as a military issue, with referrals being made to the garrison Commanding Officer, rather than an Educational Welfare Officer. Recognising the mobility of service students, the document outlines clearly what should be included in pupil records and indicates how often service schools should update these.

Boarding School Allowance (BSA) is payable to a serving member of the army if they choose to send their child to a boarding school. The amount payable is intended to cover some of the expense of a boarding school education. Current figures (at 1 August 2004) show that £3408 for a junior school child and £4330 for a secondary school child can be claimed per term. Children qualify for the BSA between the ages of eight and eighteen. A list of eligible boarding schools is held by the SCE and at all army pay offices. The CEAS comments that:

> "the allowance is to provide continuity of education for children who would otherwise have to move frequently from school to school due to parental postings. The BSA does not cover the full cost of fees. Parents must make a compulsory contribution of 10 per cent, even when the fees are less than the full rate of BSA. In the case of more expensive schools parents may find themselves ' topping up' BSA by as much as 75 per cent of the actual school fees. There will also be significant costs to cover school uniform, visits, etc." (CEAS, 2004).

The issues of the BSA and the financial burden of a boarding school education have been closely followed by the Army Families Federation. The Army Families Federation's comment that "the BSA is not keeping pace with the fees charged," (AFF, 2004) highlights that army parents are being required to pay higher and higher school fees themselves. Foreign and Commonwealth Office personnel are entitled to the Continuity of Education Allowance but their allowance covers up to £6695 per term for a secondary aged boarder. There is clearly an anomaly in the system. Alternative boarding school education can be obtained at the Duke Of York's Military School in Kent, a co-educational 11-18 boarding school for the children all serving and retired armed forces personnel, funded by the Ministry of Defence. Fees are subsidised, so that the soldier pays only £1200 per year per child. The school has a strong military ethos which is acknowledged in its prospectus.

After a series of meetings held across the UK in 2004, organised by the CEAS, general issues pertaining to the education of service children were recognised. These were sent to a national working group, chaired by the CEAS, containing representatives from the CEAS, the MOD and the DfES, as well as regional representatives who were usually headteachers from service schools. During the summer, 2004, a letter was written to Charles Clarke (the then Secretary of State) from a headteacher representing the National Association of State Schools for Service Children (NASSSC) following discussion at the regional forums and the national working party. There was a growing realisation that the main issues nationally were – the need for increased funding for service schools in order to assist schools needing a student services manager to manage movement and chase up files; problems with data and transfer information; issues concerning SEN such as the transfer of statements between local education authorities and curriculum continuity. They calculated that it cost on average £1275 extra to educate an army child. There were also issues with inconsistency in Ofsted inspection requirements with there being a lack of recognition for service children

as a special group. These issues were fed up to the SFTF. The NASSSC also passed on their concerns to various Members of Parliament in constituencies with a strong service presence. Service children's issues have also been raised at parliamentary level (Hansard 2004).

The Army Families Federation (AFF) was set up in 1982 (initially as the Federation of Army Wives' Clubs) to voice the views and concerns of army families about their unique way of life. Today, these concerns are communicated via the AFF's magazine, The AFF Families Journal, and a bi-annual conference held in London, to which members of the Ministry of Defence are invited to attend. An independent organisation, the AFF employs specialists in the areas of education, housing and special needs in order to support individuals in these areas. Recent events in the Gulf have highlighted the need for a specialist in the area of the Territorial Army, in order to support families from this increasingly important area of army service. The AFF highlights current issues and organises questionnaires in order to gauge the responses of families of serving soldiers. These act as an important means of understanding what experience of life in the army the families have today. In 2003, the issue of accompanied service (when families move around and live with the serving member of the army) was targeted by the AFF (AFF, 2003). In a survey of nearly 400 army families around the world, it was revealed that the biggest disincentive to overseas' accompanied service was the effect on children's education. This was represented by 28% of responses from Great Britain, 24% from Germany, 28% from Northern Ireland, and 20% from Cyprus. It should be noted, however, that good schooling was perceived as an incentive in 10% of responses from Northern Ireland, and 9% from Cyprus. The lack of spouse employment was perceived as the second biggest disincentive in all areas.

In the Second Continuous Attitude Survey (AFF, 2004), sent out to a random sample of 10% of army spouses, 57% said that their children had had to change schools following their last family move due to Service reasons. 51% of officers' spouses, an increase of 6% points since the first Families Survey, and 35% of soldiers' spouses, a decrease of 10% points, believed that the impact of army life on their children's education was unacceptable. Satisfaction with SCE schools and childcare provided by the army was, however, high. 65% of those with children at a Service school were satisfied or very satisfied with the education

they were receiving, with 17% being neutral on the matter and 17% feeling dissatisfied. Similarly, of those who used childcare provided by the army, 82% were satisfied with the quality of the care provided. Both surveys indicated that there was a growing level of concern that a services' lifestyle can have on the education of children.

Support can also be found from other external agencies, including the Army Welfare Service, the Army Benevolent Fund and Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families' Association (SSAFA). All of these offer professional and confidential advice to soldiers and their families.

2 – UPTON

Upton Garrison

Upton is a large garrison town in the South of England, situated in Southshire, a rural county, whose infrastructure is dependent on the military, farming and tourism. The town's facilities include a pub, a fish and chip shop, a medium size low-cost supermarket, a small convenience store, a petrol station and a small police station. Within the garrison itself, military families can access a range of facilities. These include a library and learning centre, a garrison church, a garrison radio station, a families centre containing a beauty therapist and a crèche and a meeting point, and a HIVE (Help, Information and Volunteer Exchange). Nearby are other military towns. Since 1993, a joint military and civilian development plan has been put in place to ameliorate the overall structure of the town and the facilities it can provide its population.

Chandler (2001) describes how the army came to Upton Garrison in 1897, building brick mess blocks and housing developments to replace its original tented camps. In 1919, Upton clearly had something of a reputation, being known as a garrison, "where many are ordered but few report" (Williams, 1971). It was said that the army's presence "overwhelmed the existing community" (Chandler, 2001). The physical landscape has become one of army quarters and army storage and depot buildings. The Zennor Estate, to the west of the town, consists of rows of 1950s built terraced and detached housing, of red brick construction. On the Charterhouse Estate, to the east of the town, quarters have been demolished to make way for new-build housing, which resembles many of the

mixed housing developments on the outskirts of any large town. One of the pupils in the focus group suggested that army houses were "all the same and there's lots of them all together" (E14). The parish of Upton, however, was only created in 1992 by amalgamating the villages of Upton (in Southshire) and another village in a neighbouring county. The neighbouring village had always been known as the officers' quartering area, whilst Upton had always been used for the quartering of other ranks. Apart from Upton Garrison itself, around Upton are a series of smaller army camps, encompassing logistics and engineering support organisations. Upton's school counsellor commented:

> "the army being here has an effect on everybody in the community. In fact, sometimes there's good things, for example the army paid for the leisure centre, which was great, but a lot of the people around here can't afford to get into it! The fact that people come and go makes life really difficult for everybody" (E10).

Fanshawe (1986) reveals that the area is dominated by mobility. In his survey, families in his sample would expect to stay in Upton for just 20½ months. The survey also suggests that army fathers were on average absent from home for 5¼ months out of a year. Fanshawe concludes that "the transient army majority is seen by some as destructive of a sense of community." In conclusion, it could be said that the army has helped to mould Upton into the town that it is today. To the newcomer, Upton could be seen as strange, "when I first came, I found it really hard getting used to the people with guns and the tanks and stuff because we didn't have any of that when I lived in Manchester" (E14). But to people who had always lived there, the army's presence was ordinary, "every time I walk to school I walk straight past the army camp and it's just normal" (E14).

Loxley town, about three miles away from Upton, is a small market town, with a range of facilities, including a small supermarket, a butchers shop, an estate agents and a bank. Upton School's finance manager commented that "the 66% of children that come from Loxley, quite a high percentage of those come from a free school meal background and usually those families go where the work is" (E9). This can only have added to the sense of transience around the community. Pilton is a small quarter area situated about two miles outside Upton, and about two miles from Loxley and Upton School. It has no facilities of its own and local residents are required to take the bus into either Upton or Loxley to go shopping or to go to the Post Office.

Census data (National Statistics, 2001) reveals that the neighbourhood of Upton, Loxley and Pilton is somewhat unique compared to national statistical information. The population was made up of 59% male and only 41% female. Given that Upton garrison was dominated by Royal Armoured Corps regiments (the last remaining corps to maintain an all male intake) this was hardly surprising. However, it became clear that Upton and surrounding areas had double the number of people in the 20 to 29 years old age group compared to the national average, with much fewer older people. The population of the area, therefore, was made artificially young by the presence of the army, with the average age of people in Upton being over ten years younger than the national average.

People in the Upton area were more likely to be single or separated (National Statistics, 2001). This would take into account the young soldiers living in the barracks accommodation. Furthermore, the population was predominantly white and from a Christian background. A higher proportion of people, compared to the national average, professed to being in "good health" and fewer people than average claimed to have a long-term illness. These would be indicative of the generally good fitness levels of serving personnel, all of whom are required to pass a basic personal fitness assessment (BPFA) every year.

Upton's high employment levels (83% of the population, compared to only 60.6% of the national population) was again representative of the number of its residents employed directly by the army, but also employed in related army service roles. Only 10.4% of Upton's population were educated to degree level or higher, compared to 19.8% nationally. This might well be because the army takes on personnel from the age of 16 and, whilst there is a preference for officers to come in at graduate entry level, this is not a requirement. The number of students in Upton was also low compared to national levels. This could be simply because children were not going on to full time higher education after leaving school or that army families were not counting their older children in the census material. As outlined earlier, older children are not considered when allocating army quarters, so they are not given a bedroom after the age of 18.

Perhaps the most surprising statistic about Upton related to the nature of home ownership. Nearly a half of the population lived in privately rented or rent-free accommodation (i.e service accommodation). This meant that in the town much

fewer people owned and occupied their own homes, a half of the national average. As a result, most of the people of Upton were not living in owner-occupied homes.

The start of the data collection phase came only a few months after the military invasion of Iraq in which many Upton based regiments were actively involved. Furthermore, seven months after the start of data collection, a battalion from Upton were deployed to Iraq for a six-month tour of duty, on peacekeeping operations. Upton School's counsellor had commented that this had on-going implications:

> "last year when the Iraq war was on, there was a lot of anxiety about parent's safety and, of course, not just fathers – many had older brothers, older sisters away. And everyone's susceptible, the whole community is susceptible. There was a lot of fear, a lot of posturing against 'the enemy' around the school. And if anyone looked remotely foreign, they would get a really hard time" (E10).

Recent copies of the garrison's newsletter have kept families in Upton informed about the work that their soldiers are doing overseas. The fact that this work is highly dangerous can best be seen in a recent copy of the army's internal magazine (Soldier, January 2005) which published a poem a 16 year old girl had written to her brother, stationed in Upton, who had died whilst serving in Iraq. Wartime is a very real concept to the community of Upton.

Documentation (Fn 13/5) revealed that an Arms Plot (troop movement information) letter had been sent out to Upton, Zennor and Charterhouse schools to inform them of the likely number of in-coming army children and to invite them to send a representative of the school over the Germany to attend an information briefing for prospective parents. As a result, army parents were limited in their choice of schooling and were not given the chance to look beyond Upton for a suitable school for their child.

There were two primary schools serving the military and civilian populations of Upton. The Charterhouse Junior and Infants' Schools served the population to the east of the town, whilst Zennor Primary School was situated in the west of the town, on the Zennor housing estate. In Loxley itself, there was a third primary school, Loxley Primary, which served the mainly civilian population of the market

town. Charterhouse Junior and Infants Schools were, in fact, made up of two separate schools. Whilst these schools shared the same site, they retained separate management and teaching structures and pupils transferring into the junior section from the infant school were, to all intents and purposes, changing to a new school altogether.

Charterhouse School

Charterhouse's agreed characteristics in its Office for Standards in Education report (Ofsted) were as follows:

> "Charterhouse Junior School is about the same size as other schools and has 139 boys and 119 girls in nine classes. The school serves an area of mainly Armed Forces and local authority housing. Fifty-seven pupils have special educational needs (SEN) although there are no statements of SEN. This is broadly average. There are few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. One pupil speaks English as an additional language which is below average. During the last school year, 45 pupils joined and 29 left the school at other than the normal times of entry and leaving. This rate of turnover is very high. Pupils' attainment on entry is variable but is below average or average depending on the year group. The school is taking part in the Primary Leadership Programme" (Ofsted, 2004).

The school prospectus revealed that the school was "proud to be connected with the Services" and considered itself "very experienced in and knowledgeable about the special factors which apply to the education of a mobile population." In this sense, the school acknowledged its special position educating army children and viewed this as an opportunity, stating that it was "happy to accept help with various projects from the services." Its relationship with armed forces parents was further recognised in its Home/School agreement, whereby the school agreed to "ensure leavers records and work samples are available on transfer to your child's new school."

Charterhouse School's Ofsted report commented that, in terms of Key Stage 2 examination results, the school's results were above average in English and Mathematics and average in Science, in comparison with similar schools with large numbers of pupils from armed forces families. They attributed the results to the comprehensive range of assessments which the school carried out regularly in order to build up a clear profile of pupils' achievements. A particular strength of the school was its induction procedure. After pupils had settled in, the school offered a range of tests to identify their learning needs. They were also allocated

a 'buddy' who they knew from either their home or their parents' regiment. Furthermore, the school's procedures to receive and send on pupils' records was described as "very efficient." The school had strong links with the garrison and had established contacts within the Army Welfare Service, the garrison church and the Ministry of Defence Police. The school did not have a website.

The parents interviewed in the study were generally very complimentary about Charterhouse. Mrs Gordon had commented that Shelley "did really well there," (P2) whilst Mrs Turner went further by suggesting that, "they had a lot of support for her [Katie] because she needs a lot of support, they have their own classrooms and you can go into other classes for help but not everybody sees you" (P1). Mrs Hobson had commented that Del's special educational needs had not been assessed at Charterhouse. As Del arrived in January of year four and had left the school to move on to Zennor Primary by March of the same year, it was possible that the school did not have time to assess his needs, or did not feel it necessary to, given that his mother had already indicated that he would be leaving.

Zennor School

Zennor Primary School's agreed characteristics in its Ofsted report were as follows:

> "Zennor Primary School is situated in North Upton in Southshire. With 315 pupils on roll it is large compared to primary school nationally. Seventy six percent of its pupils are from military service families and the remainder are from rented or owner-occupied properties. Although the range of abilities of the children entering the school is wide, overall attainment on entry is average. The proportion of children with special educational needs is twenty two percent, which is broadly in line with the national average. However, the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need, three and a half percent, is well above average. This is because the school has a special unit for children with moderate learning difficulties. Five percent, a below average proportion, are eligible for free school meals. None of the pupils speak English as an additional language. Including the headteacher, every teacher is responsible for 23 pupils which is broadly in line with the average from England as a whole. The very high percentage of pupils and staff from service families explains the high turnover of both. In the last school year, 149 pupils were admitted and 160 left" (Ofsted, 2001)

Zennor Primary School's Ofsted report commented that, in terms of Key Stage 2 examination results, the school's results were average in English, below average

for Mathematics and well above average for Science, in comparison with similar primary schools with large numbers of pupils from Armed forces families. The school gathered a "range" of assessment data and passed this on to the school's Assessment Manager and Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. In turn, this information was then passed around all classroom teachers. Within Key Stages One and Two there was a two-year cycle of activities within the curriculum. Pupils were given a Record of Achievement which allowed assessment and personal information to be recorded and, ultimately, taken on to future schools.

The school's induction process was viewed as "excellent," with new pupils being named in assembly and assigned a 'buddy' from their year group. Parents were contacted shortly after admission to talk through concerns on an informal basis. As a result, pupils were seen to settle into the school very quickly. The Staff Welcome Handbook noted that each new child would be registered and interviewed by the Headteacher, but that class teachers, after that time, would be expected to keep detailed notes on each child, including an Entry Profile. Enrolment forms asked for details of the parents' regimental affiliation. The school's ties with the local army base were described as "valuable" and it was noted that these links had helped to set up a new play area in the school. Whilst the school's prospectus did not refer specifically to its situation within an army garrison, a section did refer to what parents should do if they knew that they were going to be posted away. The school's website was under construction at the time of the research.

Mrs Hobson was very enthusiastic about the education that Del had received at Zennor, "they were always having meetings, some of them I didn't understand, but I was always invited to them" (P4). As a result of her experiences there, she had volunteered to go into the school as a classroom assistant. The school was obviously over-subscribed as both Mrs Hobson and Mrs Carter had to wait some time before there were spaces at the school for their children. Mrs Carter had also commented (Fn 25/9) that she had heard that the school were advising parents not to send their children on to Upton School. In the school's prospectus, however, mention was made of the school's links with Upton School.

Upton School

Upton Secondary School was situated a mile and a half outside Upton town, near to the sleepy market town of Loxley. Upton School was an 11-16 Comprehensive School. Upton had been chosen as a research centre as it had been involved in research work before. There were 390 pupils on roll at the school, with over a third of the school population coming from an army background. 27% of the children were registered on the SEN Code of Practice (against a national pattern of only 18.1% SEN) and year 11 GCSE results for 2005 were 38% grades A* to C. Other schools in Southshire LA had gained an average 58% grades A* to C at GCSE for the same period.

In the school's Ofsted report the agreed characteristics of the school were as follows:-

> "Upton is a very small secondary school serving a highly mobile garrison community in a low-income rural area. The school is under-subscribed and has a high proportion of spare places. Though broadly equal overall, there are disproportionate numbers of boys and girls in some years. Pupils are almost exclusively of white British background with very few for whom English is not their mother tongue. Attainment on entry is well below the national average and there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, few of whom have statements. The most numerous are those with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties" (Ofsted, 2003).

Upton School had 23 full-time members of teaching staff and 2 part-time teachers. In common with other secondary schools attended by service children in the area (for example, Ablington School, five miles away), Upton had a high proportion of army children. These children represented a significant minority of the intake at one third of the total number of pupils at the school rather than a majority. Furthermore, in common with another secondary school nearby with a similar percentage of army children Upton had recently experienced a difficult Ofsted inspection (2003) and had been put under Special Measures. The education experienced by children at Upton could be seen as similar to that of other schools in the locality.

Parents' views about the school were generally positive. Mrs Gordon had commented (Fn 26/2) that she was very happy with the school as it was quick to telephone her and keep in contact if there were any concerns. One parent (Fn, 30/9) had felt inclined to write to the local newspaper in order to register her

support for the school. She stated that Upton was a good school and that it "only needed more support from its parents to back up the teaching staff." The theme of unsupportive parents was echoed at the school's parents' post-Ofsted information meeting (Fn 25/11). There, Mrs Carter had commented that "the other parents aren't here because they don't care." This was responded to by another army parent, who had stated:

> "if we spread the negative attitude, I am sure that this school will close. We must start to spread a positive vibe. I'm in the army and the first thing that happens is that we're told don't send them here."

Indeed, at the meeting, only 39 parents from 34 different families were present. The school's Ofsted report highlighted that parents did not always respond positively to the school's efforts.

The school's SENCO had resigned before the Ofsted inspection and the report highlighted that pupils did not have their needs identified according to the Code of Practice. As a result, provision for pupils with special educational needs was considered to be poor. Upton advertised for a SENCO on several occasions throughout the year of research, but was unsuccessful in appointing anybody. As a result, a senior teacher was asked to carry out the role. The curriculum limited Modern Foreign Language provision to French, although a lunchtime club existed for children interested in learning German. Teaching in lessons was viewed as satisfactory or better in 72.5% of the lessons observed. Inspectors claimed that "teachers [did] not have sufficiently high expectations of pupils' work or behaviour." (Ofsted, 2003)

Southshire LA's Ofsted inspection (2002b) indicated that the county had recognised that 10% of its school population were from an armed forces background. However, the report did not comment on any relationships forged with the armed forces, nor on any initiative set up by the LA specific to armed forces children. None of the targets set by Ofsted pertained to armed forces children.

3 – ALCHESTER

Alchester Garrison

Alchester is a very large garrison town in the East of England, situated in Eastshire whose infrastructure is dependent on the military, farming and commerce. The town's facilities include all the large national retail chains and leisure facilities one would find in any city. Within the garrison itself, military families can access a range of facilities. These include a library and learning centre, a garrison church, a garrison radio station, a families centre with a beauty therapist, a crèche, a meeting point and a welfare amenities centre containing the local HIVE and regimental welfare offices. A tour of the garrison housing area (Fn 4/4/05) revealed that there was a mixture of service housing, with some new-build housing, although many houses built in the 1970s were clearly in a poor condition. Soldiers' and officers' quarters were situated on separate roads. The garrison was undergoing major refurbishment work, involving the building of new quarters and military facilities, at the time of the research.

The population profile of Alchester was somewhat different to Upton, given its unique status as being a "garrison within a town, rather than one existing in isolation outside of civilian centres of population" (Method Publishing, 2006). The population was made up more equal mixture of service and civilian people. As a result, the overall population for the garrison and surrounding area was one of an equal proportion of men to women, with a higher percentage of inhabitants falling within the 20-44 age range than any other group. As the garrison was made up of a mixture of infantry and support regiments, there would have been more female soldiers serving within the area, given that they are not prevented from holding these jobs.

Alchester School

The school's most recent Ofsted inspection agreed that the school's description was:

> "This comprehensive school is situation on the outskirts of Alchester. There are 530 boys and girls on roll aged between 11 and 16 and it is much smaller than the average secondary school nationally. Pupils come from the immediate area and about a third come from the married quarters of the Alchester Garrison, leading to considerable pupil mobility as their parents move between military postings. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The number of pupils eligible for free school

meals is below the national average, but a significant minority experience social and financial disadvantage. Their ethnic heritage is mainly white European. A small number of pupils come from minority ethnic families and the percentage of pupils not having English as their first language is slightly higher than the national average. About a quarter of the pupils are identified as having special educational needs, which is well above the national average. The school has a dyslexia unit for 18 pupils and 47 pupils hold statements to address their specific needs, which is well above the national average. Attainment on entry reflects the full range of prior attainment with a higher proportion having achieved standards below expectations for their ages. The school's aims seek to provide for the needs of all its pupils and to develop their personal skills, confidence and academic potential, recognising and rewarding achievement" (Ofsted, 2002c).

In 2005, the school achieved 38% grades A* to C at GCSE. This compared with a figure of 57% for the whole of Alchester's LA. The Ofsted report considered that the school's examination results were above average when compared with similar schools and highlighted the need to take into account the high mobility of the students as well as the high number of special educational needs. The school gave priority admission to children from five local primary schools, two of which were situated within the army quarter area. The school's website, which was under development at the time of the research, was to provide access for staff, visitors, parents and students in order to provide an up to date account of the school's day to day life. The school was also in the process of applying for specialist status in ICT (Fn 6/4/05).

The school's mission statement as stated in the school prospectus was:

> "To be a school with an orderly, caring and cheerful environment in which all students and staff enjoy success and a sense of achievement."

The school's motto, of 'success for all' was clearly displayed throughout the school but was most obvious in the entrance area (Fn 4/4/05).

It was felt, locally, that Alchester was the 'army' school (A3) and that its SEN department was particularly good (Fn 6/4/05 also confirmed in the school's Ofsted report). Parents talked of the school being "good at keeping in contact" and they valued the school sorting out problems straight away. It was also mentioned that parents could go into school with no appointment. (Fn 7/4/05) Another parent

considered that the school was “fantastic” as it was always “sending out letters” (Fn 7/4/05).

Chapter Five - The Children

In this chapter, the emerging themes from the four focus children are presented along with an intra-child analysis. The unique themes emerging from each child are then considered as a means of deepening our understanding of the children. This chapter should be read alongside the individual stories for each child presented in Volume Two.

1 – THEMES EMERGING FROM ANALYSIS OF THE CHILDREN'S STORIES

Background Information

All of the children had attended a minimum of four schools including Upton. When considering the children's earliest school experiences, Nick and Katie had experienced the most disruption. Nick, who couldn't remember which school he had attended, went to his first primary school for only one term before moving. Katie attended her first primary school for two years then moved on. In comparison, both Shelley and Del experienced stability in their earliest educational experiences, with Shelley attending her first school for three years before moving and Del spending just over three years at his first primary school. For Shelley and Del, this was due to their mothers marrying for a second time to army personnel. However, after this early stability, both Shelley and Del experienced several changes of school in within a very short time. Del and Shelley's school experiences were confined to movement within England, which would not have resulted in a significant change of curriculum. Conversely, Nick had initially been educated in Northern Ireland, whilst Katie had spent most of her time in Germany. In all four cases, the end of Key Stage Two exams (KS2 SATs) revealed that the children had low literacy scores (the highest grade being a level 3) and Del was the only child able to remember his results. A teacher interview revealed that:

> "children who have moved in, say, years 4 and 5 who have never followed through a reading scheme and went from one reading programme to another ... these children are highly at risk of not developing the basic literacy skills" (E1).

Of the four children, only Nick had not previously been diagnosed as having Special Educational Needs (SEN). Katie had been diagnosed with dyslexia in Germany and had been issued with a Statement of SEN, for her literacy and

numeracy difficulties, as well as her self-esteem issues, shortly before leaving Germany. Del was not diagnosed with dyslexia until late on in his primary schooling (year five) when he was put onto the Code of Practice for SEN at School Action Plus level. Shelley had been registered on the Code of Practice at the School Action level for literacy difficulties. However, by year six, she was deemed to have made sufficient progress and this was removed.

The Children and School

The actual process of moving school was almost neutralised by the children. When Katie was asked about her first day at school in England, she commented that her mum and dad went to visit and her sister was crying. She finished the sentence in a matter of fact way by saying, "that's all," (K1) as if the process was normal. When discussing how she prepared to come to Upton School, she commented on getting a bus pass and new uniform, rather than talking through some of the issues of beginning at a secondary school. Shelley, too, was very neutral about moving school, stating that moving house was worse than changing schools because, "it took ages to paint it and put all the stuff away and that" (S1). When Del was asked about his feelings about moving school, he changed the subject and began to talk about the process of moving house, "I was quite nervous because I didn't know anyone. I didn't live too far from the school when I was at my old school. I remember when we first pulled up, it was like are these our houses ..." (D1) In a similar way, Nick wanted to talk about moving house, rather than changing schools:

> "Researcher - What does it feel like, that week before you move?
> Nick - Well it's nervous because you don't know if you're going to pack enough to get on the lorry, or just take stuff by car" (N1).

The language that the children used when discussing their schools was also similar. In all cases, the children never used personal pronouns such as 'my' or 'mine' when it came to talking about their school, preferring to call Upton 'the school' or, just, 'school'.

Yet it became possible to see how much moving schools had affected the children, in spite of their outward appearance of not caring about it. Del, for example, claimed that, "the night before we all came here [to Upton] for the first day nobody slept, but I was, like, never mind" (D2). However, when he was

asked about his experience of moving school in more detail he admitted that, "I was quite nervous because I didn't know anyone" (D1). This was quite a big admission from a boy who appeared to love the army life. Nick, Shelley and Katie were more open about their feelings when it came to moving school. Nick commented that he was "nervous because you don't know no-one and it's scary because there are older people" (N1). Shelley considered that she had been "a bit nervous because half the people I didn't know," (S1) whilst Katie commented that "it was really hard for me leaving all my friends behind. But I knew some people at the school over here" (K1). Shelley mentioned (S1) that when she was at primary school, she had been referred to a doctor because she used to wet her bed. She mentioned this in response to being asked whether she had found anything difficult at primary school, suggesting that there might be a link between the two. Her bed-wetting might have been a result of anxiety at that time. The children did not comment on difficulties they might have had with changes in curriculum, although Nick and Del had also mentioned that their parents had had some problems getting them into their nearest primary school, resulting in there being some delay before they could be registered.

For all of the children, there was a relation between their favourite subjects and self-esteem issues. Shelley loved Art lessons because she had "always been told [she was] good at art" (S2). She disliked History because she clashed with the history teacher. Shelley's mum had stated that the key to making progress at school, for Shelley, was whether she "got on" (P2) with teachers or not. Nick liked Physical Education (PE) because he loved football and his friends were in the same PE group as him. He disliked History because he had not studied History at Primary School and felt anxious about his ability in the subject. Del stated that he liked PE because it wasn't "boring" (D2) whilst his list of subjects that he didn't like (ICT, Technology, History, Maths and English) stemmed from his own learning difficulties, "all we do is write, write, write" (D2). Subjects with a high content of writing, needing strong literacy skills, challenged Del because of his learning needs. Katie stated that she liked English because they studied poetry and were allowed to listen to Mozart in the classroom. However, during the year, the subjects that she liked changed as she also mentioned ICT and Art, demonstrating fluidity in her feelings. She disliked Science because she felt that the pace was too quick for her and she "only ha[d] a certain amount of time to finish things" (K2). Like Del, the subject area challenged her because of her own

learning difficulties. When she felt under pressure she became overly anxious and gave up.

None of the children could be described as being overly active in lessons. Nick, Shelley and Katie could be seen to be slightly more active than Del, however. Katie and Shelley often appeared to hang back in lessons and were not overly confident about joining in with classroom activities. With Shelley this could be due to her distancing herself from her classmates. In the autumn and winter terms, Shelley was placed into what was described as a "selective group" (E3) in order to build up her confidence. Theoretically, the smaller group should have contained a similar group of children, who would benefit from more one to one support. In reality, however, Shelley found herself with pupils who were often both physically and mentally less mature than she was. This led to her comment that, "no, I'm not being rude or anything, but I don't look like any of them" (Ob, 17/11). As a result, she paired off with the only her "mature" pupil in the teaching group, Suzy. Whilst she was not hostile towards the other class members, she was not overly friendly, either. Her involvement in learning tasks was guided by her need to have the support of a friend. When she moved teaching group in the summer term, she went into a group without Suzy and was often observed "sitting at the front, she doesn't seem to know the group and is uncertain" (Ob, 22/4).

Katie had learning difficulties and was supported by a Statement of Special Educational Need, written by SCE Educational Psychologists in Germany, which took into account her Literacy, Numeracy and self-esteem issues. In lessons, like Shelley, she did not often push herself forward to answer questions. In one French lesson (Ob, 28/4), when the class were using individual white boards to write down their answers, Katie was extremely hesitant in responding and often waited to see what other pupils had written first. She also appeared unable to make connections between her home life and issues being discussed at school. Given that she had spent a considerable amount of her life in Germany, lessons focusing on life in other countries should have provided her with an opportunity to discuss her experiences. However, she remained quiet or did not provide any further discussion about these experiences (Obs 7/1, 22/1, 28/4). On the other hand, lessons which had little opportunity to discuss issues in great detail, resulted in Katie mentioning her different heritage – for example, the English lesson, where she used as her dictionary word 'Germany' (Ob, 11/2). In

discussion with the teaching assistant who knew Katie, she said that Katie needed to be asked directly about her life in Germany in order to make any association between her life there and life in the United Kingdom (Fn, 7/1).

Nick often appeared to be more involved in lessons than any of the other children. He would often volunteer to carry out tasks around the classroom, including tidying away or collecting in books. However, like Shelley and Katie, he would not often actively put up his hand to answer questions. In order for him to take part, he needed the inducement of a classroom competition, being awarded points which could potentially put him ahead of his peers (Obs 5/1, 9/3). His need to please his teachers by helping them might have been a way of covering up his lack of involvement. By collecting in books, he could still maintain a high profile with teaching staff, even if that profile was not from his academic involvement in class. He kept a low-profile in the classroom when he had finished the work that had initially been set and would often fail to alert the teacher that he had finished. In contrast to Del, however, Nick took a very dim view of absence from school and could not understand why people would want to be away from school. When his friend, Steven, experienced disruption at home (Steven's father was deployed to Iraq) Nick was bemused that Steven should be away or that he might prefer not to be in lessons (Fn 13/5).

Del was the least involved out of any of the pupils. Del's attendance rate at 83.7%, all of which were sanctioned by Mrs Hobson, was significantly lower than the other pupils, all of whom had a percentage rate above 90%. His high number of absences affected several areas of his experience at school and, also, his attitude towards school. Having been absent, he missed out on some activities on his return to school as teachers had to put him to one side in class in order for him to catch up on the work that he had missed (Obs 8/12, 23/2, 3/3). In one Food Technology lesson, he was forced to work with another pupil because he did not have the required ingredients, having been away from the previous lesson (Ob 17/11). Perhaps in order not to draw attention to himself and as a result of his neutral relationship with his teachers Del did not inform staff that he had been away and did not ask for help with his work – the overall sense was of Del almost "passing through" school and not becoming overly involved with it (Ob, 13/10). Instead, he copied work from his friends and asked them to explain things for him (for example, Ob 17/11). As a result, Del could often be confused as to whether

he had actually been in a particular lesson or not, and was not sure where he had got to in his work schedule (Ob 23/2). In one lesson he was trying to catch up with the work that his peers were doing and appeared to feel more in control by deliberately messing up the work (Ob 8/12). Lack of involvement in lessons could be seen as a way of absolving responsibility for one's learning.

There were, however, some extremely positive examples of tasks and school-work across the course of the year. Katie and Shelley appeared to relish the chance to make their own wooden toys (Ob, 20/11). They also enjoyed project work in ICT and Science. Del was at his most animated when, in a Science lesson, he created his own experiment which had nothing to do with the lesson objectives but which he carried out almost obsessively (Ob, 23/2). All of these were examples of independent learning. In one particularly difficult lesson, it was clear how a teacher-led, whole-class approach was not successful (Ob, 10/6) with the result that there was a feeling of antagonism towards the teacher involved. Given the pupils' failure to get involved in lessons and their lack of engagement with teaching staff (see below), independent study provided them with learning tasks which they could carry out without having to interact with anyone else - teachers or peers.

In all cases there was a marked lack of engagement with the teaching staff. All four children were asked who was their favourite teacher. Del and Nick were very quick to reply that they didn't have one, whilst Shelley and Katie were confused in their replies, with Shelley stating that she couldn't remember the teacher's name and Katie pausing then stating that she couldn't remember. This lack of engagement with staff was also seen in the classroom when all of the children failed to ask for help if they did not understand their work. With Del this was particularly pronounced as he was often absent and would have done well to ask for help on his return into the classroom in order to catch up on work. Instead, he chose to ask his friends, or copy the work of the person sitting next to him. When Nick had been absent on one occasion, when he was acting as school receptionist, he was asked whether he would approach the teacher for help, to which he replied, "you must be joking" (Ob 11/2). There was further, more extreme, evidence of a lack of positive relationship between teachers and the children when Del, Katie, Shelley and Nick were asked whether they would confide in teaching staff. Both Del and Nick were very blunt in their replies,

stating that they would never tell teachers if they had a problem at home or at school. Katie and Shelley were more moderate in their responses, claiming that they would talk to teachers about problems in school, but that they would never confide in a member of staff about problems at home. Del and Nick were very clear that they would only discuss issues with their mothers.

Yet it was possible to see positive relationships emerging between certain teachers and the focus children. Katie became increasingly attached to her form tutor, who also taught music, who had joined the school mid-way through the data collection phase. Katie stated that she liked Mrs S because she had told Katie that she was going to be at the school for at least five years. Katie appeared to crave a stable relationship with a member of staff. As a result of this, Katie started to sing in the school choir and began to help Mrs S with tasks around the school such as putting up posters for school concerts. Katie was adamant that she disliked teachers who were unfriendly and unhelpful. Both of the boys showed that they were able to have a positive relationship with certain members of the teaching staff. The school had asked a local football coach to come in and teach some of the boys PE. Del was seen talking almost animatedly with the coach. It might be that he did not perceive this man to be a permanent member of staff so could, therefore, be trusted. Nick also displayed warmth towards one of the school's teaching assistants, leaning over to her in lessons and asking for help. Neither of the boys were seen talking in this way to their teachers. Whilst Nick was happy to take part in lessons, answering questions and tidying up, he would not linger after class to talk with staff. Positive relationships within class time were seen in PE, Food Technology and English, where teachers asked the opinions of the children and entered into dialogue with them.

When asked why they attended school, the pupils gave similar answers. Shelley stated that she went to school, "to learn, to get my education, get a good job and go to university" (S2). Nick replied, "so you can get educated and when we're older you can get a job" (N2). Nick and Shelley were very alike since their responses focused on the process of education alone and the end result. Katie, however, said she went to school, "to get an education, to make new friends and, that's all, " (K2) whilst Del responded, "well, to learn stuff, to get an education, that's it. Well, I suppose we have a bit of fun, muck about and stuff" (D2). Katie and Del placed the importance of education and schooling as a priority, then

mentioned the social side of schooling and the need to make friends. What makes the four responses stand out is the almost formulaic nature of them, as if the pupils were responding in the way that was expected of them. The fact that Shelley and Nick did not mention their friends at all, whilst for Del and Katie friendships were considered last, suggests that the social side of schooling was not as important for these children.

The four children appeared to have a highly defined sense of justice – they wanted to see things being done in the 'right way'. Del and Nick were observed being angry with teachers who punished the whole class for misdemeanours, rather than dealing with the offender individually (Obs 7/1, 23/2, 10/6). Del was very adamant about the way that friends should behave towards each other, "it's like, you never leave your flock, you stay with them" (Ob 23/2). He felt that his friends should put loyalty to each other above their relationships with their teachers. On this occasion, he was angry with Steven for talking to a teacher about being bullied. When Nick and his friend, Steven, were chatting in class, Steven was extremely angry that he was told off, rather than Nick (Fn 10/6). This sense of justice was particularly pronounced in Nick, who had a clearly defined image of what made a good teacher, they should be someone who was, "sporty, they don't just do the same things, always on time and always here" (N2). The fact that some of his teachers obviously didn't show up to teach him every day on time might have demonstrated a lack of sense of duty to him. Nick was also quick to point out when other pupils at the school were not behaving as they should – speaking out in class that somebody was using a mobile phone (Ob 13/5). He was quick to check that he had been awarded the correct number of points for his work in class (Ob 7/1), and was angry when he was awarded low marks for a piece of work that he felt should be given higher (Ob 3/3). He was unhappy at the state of the equipment in his music lesson and clearly felt that they deserved to have something better (Ob 24/3). More obvious, however, was his and Steven's anger at Del, when they found out that he was lying about how he hurt his arm, resulting in another boy getting into trouble (Fn 4/2). The sense of justice could also be transferred if to a friend if the children felt that that friend was behaving badly and was 'letting the side down,' also seen in the earlier reference to Steven's sense of justice. In the same way both Nick and Shelley averted their eyes when friends of theirs were being punished by a teacher, as if they agreed

with the punishment and felt that making eye-contact with their friend might somehow legitimise their 'crime' (Obs 9/3, 2/4).

Katie and Shelley were also seen to have a pronounced sense of justice. Katie was explicit in her acknowledgment of the need for rules at school. One of her photographs was taken in the school corridor and the point of this photograph, for Katie, was to show that:

> "we've got a corridor rule where you are supposed to walk one side if you're going somewhere and people should walk on the other side if they are coming back" (K4).

Katie was also quick to help teaching staff, staying behind after lessons to clear away or set up for the following class. When asked about this, her comment was, "it's good to give them a hand," (K4) as if not doing so would go against her need to please. When it came to her peers, Katie admired people who stood up against others. She was particularly fond of Shelley because, "she's stuck up for me when people have bullied me. She's said to people to leave me alone" (K4). Katie admired her strength of character. In one lesson, Katie was extremely distressed because another pupil who had stolen her bus pass was in an adjacent classroom. Whenever Katie was approached, she mentioned the fact that the pupil was there and that he had got away with the theft (Ob 20/11). Shelley often got involved in maintaining good order in the classroom. On several occasions, she chastised her classmates if they were talking over each other or making fun of someone (Obs 30/1, 9/3). Outside one classroom, Shelley was quick to check that another pupil had not been hurt after he had been pushed over (Fn 11/2) She was seen to be extremely honest in one PE lesson (Ob 2/4) when she admitted that she hadn't made much of an effort in the previous lesson, so only awarded herself three out of five effort points.

For Del and Shelley, friendships appeared to be defined by fluidity and change. At the start of the research, Del appeared to be very friendly with Nick and Steven. They had met at primary school and lived in the same quarter area. As a result, they joined the same local football team. However, after their argument in February (Fn 4/2) Nick and Steven paired off together, whilst Del was seen spending more and more time with Jeff. His friendship with Jeff was based around Del's perception that Jeff was as mature as he was and was, therefore,

more mature than Nick and Steven, claiming that Jeff and he liked "football, fun and girls and guys stuff" (Ob 23/2). Jeff also lived in Upton and came from an army background, although he and his mum no longer lived in an army quarter as his parents had separated. However, when we had discussed friends in November (D1), Del had stated that a boy called Daniel was his best friend but that he had recently moved away. Compared to his response in July, stating that Jeff was his "best mate" (D4) there was obviously a change and his friendship with Daniel was a distant memory.

Shelley appeared to have a difficult relationship with her friend, Suzy. As stated earlier, Suzy was physically as mature as Shelley, which perhaps helped to explain their growing friendship. Furthermore, Shelley was clearly very impressed with Suzy's home-life, claiming that she had a, "a really nice house" (S1). Suzy's parents were not in the army. Shelley clearly relied on Suzy for support in school. They had a physical intimacy with each other – they leaned on each other during lessons, (Ob 2/4) and, on a particularly difficult day for Shelley, Suzy chivvied her along by playfully hitting her on the backside and making her laugh (Ob 25/11). Although Shelley described Suzy as her best friend, by the end of June their relationship had become less close. Suzy had begun to spend time with older girls in year 10 at Upton School. These girls were often aggressive towards Shelley and Suzy appeared to side with them, rather than her friend. After this time, Shelley appears to have no significant girl friends, although she mentioned that she had seen "some others" from her year group outside school (S4).

Both Nick and Katie had more fixed friendships at Upton School. Nick was friendly with Steven, with whom he shared a passion for football. They lived near to each other, on the same quarter area, and played for the same football team. It was noticeable that Nick had not photographed anybody but Steven in his set of prints. When asked about this, he stated that, "Steven is my best friend. I get on with the other people, but I don't really like them" (N4). There appeared to be something exclusive about their friendship. In lessons they could be seen sharing jokes with each other, which they did not share with anyone else. In one observation (Ob 13/11) they performed a 'ritual' by clasping each other's small fingers, in order to seal a promise that they had made to each other. They appeared to be very relaxed with each other and leaned on each other in lessons if they were watching a display in the classroom (Ob 20/11).

Katie's best friend was a local girl called Alison. Katie's comment about Alison was endearing, almost childlike, "she really is my best friend in the whole world" (K4). Alison was the more dominant of the two of them, bossing Katie around in lessons (for example, Obs 30/1, 2/4) and hiding answers to a quiz from her (Ob 22/1). Alison appeared to want to be powerful, but Katie also appeared to be happy to be dominated. In spite of the stability that her friendship with Alison offered, Katie also responded to the arrival of new students. One of the few photographs that she took containing people showed Chris, a pupil who had recently arrived at Upton. Katie had clearly latched on to him, stating that, "he came to the school quite recently and joined my group and we became friends" (K4). Her choice of new friendships, rather than trying to get to know some of the people that had been at the school with her since the beginning of year seven, was indicative of the relationship problems that the staff had already realised that she had. As a result, the school had arranged for Katie to become a member of the school's 'Gardening Club,' which was a small group set up to help children overcome their social problems (Fn 23/1). Katie did not mix with any of the children in her quarter area, Pilton. She commented that all she did when she got home was play out in the park (K1). Katie's school file revealed that her family had been subjected to some racial harassment in their quarter area (Fn 8/12) so Katie rarely socialised with anyone locally. Furthermore, Mrs Turner had revealed that there were no other families from her husband's regiment quartered locally, so the family would not have known anyone when they came to the area (P1).

The Children and the Army

Comparing the friendships that the four children had, it was clear that the boys maintained friendships within the army structure, whilst the girls made friendships amongst the civilian population. This was indicative of the children's attitude to the army. Del and Nick were clear about the role and the involvement of the army in their lives. When they were questioned about their fathers, they were able to give a clear explanation of their work in the army and their regiment (N1 and D1). Nick's opinion of the army was more tempered than Del. Whilst Nick called his father's regiment, The Westmoorlands, "my regiment" (N1) he was also able to see some of the negative effects that army life could bring. Nick and his brother had asked not to be moved from Upton because they did not want to lose their new friends (N1) and he was also able to think about the 'bigger picture,' claiming that he wouldn't join the army himself because, "it's not me, you know, I don't like

going to war and killing people" (N4). Del, however, was almost overly effusive in his praise of the army, "you don't have to pay to move, they pay you to do that. You never stay in one place but you make friends" (D1). It almost sounded as if Del was trying to persuade himself that he liked the army lifestyle, although he was adamant that he would join the army himself - and had, in fact, already joined the army cadets. The army was also a source of rivalry for the boys. Del, particularly, identified with his step-father's regiment and took upon himself many of the inter-regimental loyalties that can exist in the army,

> "Nick's a Westie and I don't get along with him. They're lazy. They did nothing when ... my dad ... was in Kosovo for about four months" (D1).

Compared to these reactions, the girls rarely mentioned the army in their interviews. Shelley was able to say what her father's job was, but her involvement in the army stopped there (S1). Katie, on the other hand, did not know what her father did and had no contact with her father's regiment.

There was also a tangible sense of impotence when Nick and Katie tried to describe their relationship with the army. Nick seemed so accepting and down-trodden when he described how his father's leave patterns had changed, resulting in the family having to cancel their planned trip to Disneyland (Ob 11/2). More tellingly, when Nick was showing his photographs, he was asked:

> "Researcher - What does this picture say about you and the army then?
> Nick - Well I've got a dull face on" (N4).

Similarly, Katie accepted unquestioningly the impact that the army had on her family life, "my dad is probably going to leave the army. It just depends whether they give him any extra time and whether we have to move or not" (K3). Katie's choice of language, identifying the army as a faceless "they," indicated her helplessness at her situation.

The army's role in the children's lives also caused some examples of extreme anxiety. War-time and tours of duty caused particularly obvious concern for the children when their fathers were away from home. Del was particularly anxious when his step-father was deployed to Iraq. He began to play up in class and had non-specific headaches. After one particularly aggressive incident, he

commented that his dad was deploying and he was really worried about the effect this would have on his mum (Fn 2/4). Shelley's step-father also deployed to Iraq at the same time. Her step-brother, David, also became aggressive and, during the Easter holidays, threw a metal bar through a window at their house. Shelley, too, was not beyond feeling concern for her step-father and commented that,

> "I worry that he's going to get shot. One of his friends got shot in the neck ... my mum's worried" (S4).

Her concerns were two-fold. She worried for her step-father but was also sensitive to the needs of her mother and was worried about the effect that his absence would have on her. Steven's father was also deployed. His mother was so low during this time and unable to cope in his absence that she returned to her family home in Manchester and left her son with a neighbour in Upton. Steven was left extremely depressed (Fn 13/5) and was eventually offered behaviour management counselling (Fn 15/6).

Nick and Katie were not beyond being worried about the army. When Katie moved to England from Germany, she complained of physical illness, "because the air was so different. German air and English air, I had to get used to it" (K1). Whether the sickness was real or psychological, moving clearly had an impact on her. Like Shelley, Katie, too, demonstrated a level of sensitivity towards her mother, claiming that her mother didn't like living in Pilton and was very unhappy (K1). Katie could not remember clearly whether her father had been away from home on a tour. Nick, however, remembered his father's eight-month tour of duty in Kenya and claimed that he "didn't know if he was going to come back" (N3). Moving house had clearly also been a cause of concern for Nick. He stated that:

> "I've got used to it now, but before we were only living in the houses for about 3 years and I didn't have many friends" (N3).

Nick's choice of language, "I've got used to it now", suggested that, like Del, he, too, was trying to persuade himself that things were better than they actually were. Furthermore, their mobile lifestyle was still a concern for him. He worried that the fact that his mum had just painted one of the walls in their quarter back to its original magnolia colour might indicate that they were on the move again (N4). (In the army, quarters have to be returned to their original state before they are

handed back to the army). On the other hand, some of the parents indicated that the army lifestyle had changed their children for the better. Mrs Turner, Katie's mother, thought that all of her children were "more open and Katie is more nosey and wants to find something out" (P1). Mrs Carter, Nick's mum, commented that Nick had "got to get around places and see places, see different schools" (P3). This she viewed as a positive aspect of the army life.

Yet above all, the army lifestyle was often normalised by the children. Several times during the school year, army patrols walked past classroom windows. The children did not comment about this or even look up from their work – their presence in the area was accepted. Civilian children also seemed to accept that the army was a part of the Southshire landscape, "every time I walk to school I walk straight past the army camp and it's just normal" (E14). Furthermore, Steven commented that he didn't see why army children were any different to civilian children (Fn 2/4). The children appeared to take the unique aspects of the army life such as moving house or dad being deployed into their strides. Del commented that when his dad was due home from Iraq he wasn't there because he was going to army cadet camp. In addition, he commented that his mum and dad had started arguing within only a few days of his return (Fn 22/6). Katie was very matter of fact about the number of times that they moved, "we were originally going to stay here for three years and then move, that's what we normally do, so we've nearly there" (K3). Nick suggested that "we're not bothered now" (N3) when it came to his dad working away from home during the week and only returning for weekends. Amongst the children there was, at least, a veneer of normality.

Parents and Schools

The parents appeared to have very different attitudes towards school that could have, perhaps, stemmed from their own experiences of being at school. Mrs Hobson (Del's mother) had left school at the age of 16 and had had a number of part-time jobs in their previous home-town. In Upton, she had not secured work outside the home because she had to look after Del's two younger brothers. However, she was hoping to become a voluntary teaching assistant at Zennor Primary School when her second son went to school. Nick's mum (Mrs Carter) had been an army child herself, experiencing a lot of her own education at army schools in Germany. She had left school at the age of 16 with a set of exam

results which she described as "not all that bad" (P3). She was now a qualified crèche supervisor, for which she had had to take further vocational examinations. Mrs Gordon (Shelley's mother) had left school at 16 with a Maths and English qualification, stating that she:

> "was glad to leave, I had no intention of going to college or anything. I just wanted to go out there and earn money" (P2).

Mrs Turner (Katie's mother) was the only one to have stayed on at school until the age of 18. In Germany, where she had spent her formative years, 18 was the minimum school leaving age. Mrs Turner was not very enthusiastic about her time in school. All of the children's fathers had joined the army at the earliest opportunity, at the age of 17, although, within the army, they had had to take various examinations and qualifications to pass from one rank to the other. None of the fathers had remained as a basic soldier. It would be fair to say, however, that levels of education within the family homes were not high.

The parents' level of support for education and schooling was fairly low, with one exception. The Carters' involvement with their sons' school was more visible than any of the other parents. When Upton School went into Special Measures, Sergeant and Mrs Carter were the only parents from the sample to attend the parents' meeting, even though this had meant that Sergeant Carter had had to travel back from his place of work during the week to do so. At the meeting there had been a low turn-out, which had been commented on by some of the parents as a cause for concern, as they had suggested that the school did not have a lot of parental support. Mrs Carter had stood up and stated that "the other parents aren't here because they don't care," (Fn 25/11) suggesting that she felt that she did care about her sons' educational provision. Mrs Carter also showed that she cared in other ways. Of all of the children, Nick's homework planner was the most used. Mrs Carter used the 'notes section' to write comments to teachers and made sure that she signed off Nick's homework every week. There was clearly some sort of dialogue at home about Nick's school-work. Of all of the children, Nick was the only one who continued to read to his mother at home (N3). Mrs Carter, perhaps from her own work experiences, was confident about who to approach in a school if she had a problem, stating she would contact "the headmaster, or I would go to the governors and put a letter or proposal into them" (P3) and had telephoned Upton School on a number of occasions when she had a

cause for concern. Mrs Carter had attended the school's Parent Review Day and provided thoughtful comments on the quality of Nick's literacy skills, as well as praising him for his efforts. Although Sergeant Carter was unable to attend the Review Day on this occasion, as it was during the day-time, he had asked Mrs Carter to comment specifically on Nick's recent PE report, suggesting that he had taken the time to read through the report at home and talk to his son about it (Fn 28/6). Perhaps Mrs Carter's own experiences of being an army child lay behind some of the 'messages' she passed on to Nick about moving schools. When Nick moved to Upton School, she told him:

> "we were going to be here until quite a long time so she told us to do well and get on, don't fight and don't bully, just be yourself, not be a different person" (N1).

This suggested that one of the coping strategies that Mrs Carter might have passed down to her son concerned fitting in and changing to suit the environment that he was in. Nonetheless, education did appear to be a concern within the household. When Sergeant Carter was posted away from Upton, only six months after they had arrived there, Mrs Carter insisted that they should retain their quarter, partly due to the boys' education:

> "I said it took me long enough to get them in there [Zennor Primary]. I'm not taking them out just yet" (P3).

The process of requesting a retention of quarter would not have been an easy one and would have involved appealing to Sergeant Carter's regiment to support the family in their request, as well as writing a formal letter to the appropriate authorities.

In comparison, Mrs Turner, Mrs Hobson and Mrs Gordon were not as 'hands-on,' preferring to take more of a back-seat when it came to their children's education. Mrs Hobson, Mrs Gordon and Mrs Turner all attended the Parent Review Day (Fn 28/6) but did not go to any other function at the school – for example, the Ofsted meeting or school concerts. Partly this could have been due to the fact that none of them were able to drive and would have had to rely on neighbours or their husbands to take them up to the school. None of the fathers attended. Katie commented that on the night of the Ofsted meeting, her father had a Mess

meeting which he had chosen to go to (Fn 26/11). It seemed that his responsibility towards the army was more important than the school meeting.

Mrs Turner had an extremely negative view of the experience of education that her children had in Germany. Following the difficulties that her son had in Germany with being assessed for his SEN, Mrs Turner couldn't believe that she:

> "went to the parents' day and they said that there was no problems and everything was fine. Two months down the road you get a report and nothing was fine" (P1).

She felt impotent to act against the school authorities in Germany because the school was an army school. Furthermore, her choice of school in Germany, she felt, was made for her because the other primary school in the area was already full up. She commented that, as a result of their battle to get their son assessed, their focus on Katie's own education had been second place. Mrs Turner was aware of the difficulties that Upton School had but was prepared to leave Katie there because taking her out would mean that she would have to travel an extra twenty minutes each way to get to another secondary school. This also mirrored Mrs Turner's experience in Germany - she was fully aware of Katie's difficulties at her primary school but thought that, since Katie would soon be going up to the secondary school, which she had considered to be excellent, in the area it would be worth remaining there. As far as Katie's social difficulties were concerned, Mrs Turner viewed these as being for the school to sort out, rather than needing to take a pro-active stance on this at home. Mrs Turner claimed that:

> "if you get a report and everything's fine, you believe that. The written word, you believe that. You go to a parents' day and they say that everything's fine, so you go home and think fine" (P1).

This appeared to suggest that she would no longer believe what a school told her about her children's progress at school and would be prepared to interact more with school authorities to get the information that she wanted about her children. However, her involvement with Katie's schooling (as discussed above) suggested that what she thought and what she did were two different things. Her attitude might have ameliorated over time by the positive experience of schooling that she felt that her children had experienced in England, "as soon as they went to Charterhouse, they went up again" (P1). Katie commented that if she had

problems with homework, she would be inclined to ask her older brother, or her mum, for help, claiming that her big brother was "pretty good at stuff" (K3). At home, the family had a computer desk, which was used by Katie's older brother for work, so Katie would sit on the floor to complete her homework if she could not use the desk. At the Parent Review day (Fn 28/6) Mrs Turner did not join in with the teacher's praise of Katie, commenting only that Katie had mis-spelled a word in her chosen piece of work.

Mrs Gordon had quite a positive attitude towards Shelley's experience of schooling in Upton (Fn 26/2) commenting that she was pleased with the school's level of communication with her, especially when there were problems. However, like Mrs Turner, Mrs Gordon admitted that her focus had not always been on Shelley's education, commenting that when she and Shelley had moved to the area:

> "there was so much going on in my life and her life there wasn't room for anything else. I know it sounds awful but schooling sort of got put on the back burner for a little while" (P2).

The sense of focusing on personal issues, rather than a child's education, was also evident in the case of Steven, whose mother returned home when her husband was deployed. In spite of this disrupting Steven's education, she simply could not cope on her own (Fn 22/6).

Since Mrs Gordon had moved to Upton, her and her husband had experienced problems with Shelley's step-brother. As a result, Mrs Gordon was adamant that she would not leave the area again because she wasn't prepared to experience all the upheaval trying to get the boy into an appropriate school, claiming that it was "criminal moving older children around" (Fn 26/2). When the boy moved back in with his mother, Mrs Gordon changed her mind, however, and the family planned their next move to Northern Ireland, which resulted in Shelley leaving Upton School in the middle of year nine, just before her Key Stage Three SAT exams. This mirrored Mrs Gordon's reasons for moving to Upton in the first place. Rather than remaining in the nearby town where they lived, so that Shelley could finish her primary schooling in the school that she was in, Sergeant and Mrs Gordon preferred to move to a quarter in Upton, due to its cheaper rent. The practicalities of family life out-weighed the need for Shelley to have educational stability. Sergeant Gordon did not get involved with Shelley's education and did

not come into school. However, Shelley had commented that, if she had a problem with homework, she would be more likely to ask her step-father for help, rather than her mum, although she did used to read to her mum when she was at primary school (S3). At the Parent Review Day (Fn 28/6) Mrs Gordon had praised the school for their work with Shelley and was extremely complimentary to Shelley about her progress.

Mrs Hobson appeared to be unhappy with the level of support that Del was receiving for his dyslexia and had found out quite recently that he was not being taken out of lessons for his support classes (P4). However, she did not go into school and take this up with them until the Parent Review day, nearly four months after her first comments (Fn 28/6). She admitted that she wouldn't know who to speak to, so would be more likely to talk to one of her friends if she felt that there was a problem with Del's schooling. Nonetheless, at home, she tried to support Del and mentioned that she had often sat down to help him with his homework. At the Parent Review Day, Mrs Hobson was told that Del had been more distracted at school. Mrs Hobson was adamant that this was due to his dyslexia issues, rather than anything that might be going on at home and did not make any connection between Del's step-father being deployed to Iraq and her son's change in behaviour (Fn 28/6). She then appeared to encourage Del's restlessness by commenting that she, too, "couldn't wait to get out of here" (Fn 28/6).

The parents displayed similar means of choosing a school and had similar reasons for sending their children to the schools that they did. In all cases, the parents did not make a positive choice in sending their children to either Upton School or the children's previous primary schools - positive, in the sense that they had chosen the school above another one because they rated it as better or a more appropriate school for their child. Mrs Hobson had chosen to send Del to his first primary school because "his grandad used to go there at the end of the day," (P4) even though she admitted that it was a "really bad" school. When she moved to Upton, she spoke to some of the army wives at her husband's previous posting, who told her that there were two primary schools in Upton and that Charterhouse would be the most appropriate given their new quarter address. When their first quarter in Upton was knocked down and they moved to the west of the town, Mrs Hobson worried about the amount of time it took Del to walk to

Charterhouse, so registered him at Zennor. Mrs Hobson did not comment on Del's transfer to Upton School, suggesting that she had expected him to go there after primary school and had not exercised her right to choose which secondary school he should attend. The schools, to her, represented ease of access.

Similarly, Mrs Gordon, Mrs Turner and Mrs Carter sent their children to Upton School because it was nearby and would not present any transport difficulties for the families. Mrs Carter commented that she had spoken to other army families when they were about to move and found out where they were sending their children, stating, "I go with the majority. It's convenient and if he needs me I'm there" (P3). Upton was the closest school for her. She was fully aware of the problems that the school was having but commented that, "as long as they're happy, I'm happy" (P3). Both Mrs Turner and Mrs Gordon also mentioned ease of access. Mrs Turner confirmed that "word of mouth" (P1) between the army personnel had been one of her means of choosing and school for Katie, although she commented that, "the difficulty is that you don't know whether that's changed. It's difficult when you're far away" (P1). A school's reputation might go up or down and relying on word of mouth might mean that a parent received information several years out of date.

The parents revealed differences in the way that they went about registering their children for the schools. When the Turners moved back from Germany they were given a list of available schools in Upton by the Army's Welfare Officer. Mrs Turner commented that her husband had been talking with other soldiers and knew of the two primary schools in Upton. She had telephoned Charterhouse School from Germany and had registered the girls and they visited the school with Katie and her sister before the girls started there. Mrs Turner commented that their previous school in Germany had not informed Charterhouse School about Katie's SEN. However, Katie's school file revealed that there was some communication between the SCE in Germany and Charterhouse before she arrived. Mrs Gordon also followed the information that her husband had received from his army friends, who had stated that Charterhouse was a "really good school" (P2). They were also given an information pack by the army, but Mrs Gordon had already made up her mind which school Shelley would go to before the pack arrived. Due to living close to Upton anyway, Shelley and her mum were able to visit Charterhouse before she came to the school. Mrs Gordon also had

friends who worked at the school, so she was also able for Shelley to see the school again during the summer holidays before she was due to start.

Mrs Carter had also received an information pack from the army before she moved to Upton. She was also aware that the army had contacted Zennor School before they arrived, as they were coming to Upton as part of a whole-regiment move, so would be one of many families moving to the area. Mrs Carter had applied for Zennor School well before they moved to Upton, claiming that she "had to apply before we came because there was the minimum number of places left in the classes" (P3). She had talked through with her sons the prospectus that Zennor had sent her and had also arranged a visit to Upton to see the school before they were posted there. She commented that visiting the school was what she always preferred to do, although, when they had moved from Northern Ireland to the mainland, this had not been possible. Mrs Hobson had a similar experience when moving from her home-town to Upton. She had not received any information from the army about schools in Upton. This might have been because she was not living in an army quarter at their previous address, so might not have been registered with the Army Welfare system there. Instead, Mrs Hobson found out about the schools from other wives and telephoned Charterhouse School. They sent her a prospectus and she was able to provisionally register Del for the school over the telephone. She commented that she and Del did not visit Charterhouse until the day that she went in to sign his admissions forms, the day before he started school. When it came to visiting Zennor Primary, she did not go in to visit the school.

A possible alternative to state school education for all of the parents could have been the option of sending their children to boarding school. And yet none of the parents had chosen to do this. Mrs Carter considered that the level of education at boarding schools would be a lot better than that provided in the local state day schools. However, she was adamant that:

> "we don't know what they're doing in the evenings when they're finished at 6 o'clock. You don't know whether they're smoking, whatever, do you? At least here they're coming home to me every night and I know" (P3).

She needed to be in control of her family and what they were doing. The Turners had some experience of boarding provision as Katie's older brother, Bruno, had

attended an SCE school in Germany which was too far away from the family quarter. As a result, he had been enrolled in the boarding section. Mrs Turner considered that boarding school would be an option if she was away from the family home working every day, so she would not be available if there was a problem. However, she also admitted that she would probably be forced to work if their children went to independent boarding schools in the UK as she acknowledged that the BSA did not cover all aspects of the financial commitment (Fn 12/8). Mrs Gordon did not express an opinion about a boarding school education for Shelley, but was amazed at the special residential school that her step-son had been sent to, commenting that the school was:

> "a special school for kids who are naughty and yet they send him home when he's naughty! They should keep him there and explain the reasons why and the reasons not, you know" (P2).

Furthermore, Mrs Gordon clearly had a very close relationship with her daughter - she had claimed that people should always "put [their] children first" (P2) so she would have been unlikely to consider a boarding school education for Shelley.

Mrs Hudson was as adamant as Mrs Carter about not wanting to send her sons to boarding school, "I don't believe in boarding schools. Not ever. You don't have kids to send them away" (P4). Unlike Mrs Carter, however, Mrs Hudson needed to have Del near her at all times:

> "he's the man of the house - calls out as he goes off to school, "have a good day, mum and be good". He worries" (P4).

She admitted that Del had a "lot on his plate," with worrying for her. It was also possible to see that this concern was two-way, "I mean, my kids are everything to me and I run around after them, even Del" (P4). Del's photographs revealed that once, when his mum had fallen over, he had taken two weeks off school in order to look after her (D4). Their relationship was founded on mutual need and neither Del nor Mrs Hobson would have tolerated the absence that a boarding school education would have brought about.

Parents and the Army

The mothers revealed different attitudes towards the army. In Mrs Carter it was clear to see an army wife who considered herself to be a part of the army

'system'. Her background was that of an army child and this might have contributed to her sense of being a part of the army experience. On the day that she was interviewed, Mrs Carter was waiting in to receive a telephone call from another woman in her husband's regiment, who was about to give birth and had arranged to have Mrs Carter look after her first daughter (Fn 26/2). Nick's photographs also showed Mrs Carter dressed up ready to go out with her friends. Nick commented that she went out with her friends sometimes but often went out with his father, presumably to the many Mess functions that would take place (N4). It was clear that Mrs Carter both supported the other army wives and was supported by them, being included in social events. Mrs Carter's use of language, she called her husband's regiment "my regiment", also pointed to her sense of belonging to the army. The family home had been decorated and did not have army furniture in it or army curtains at the windows. Mrs Carter clearly wanted to 'own' her space and create a family home. Furthermore, she was enthusiastic about her time as a child in the army, "I would have those days back again any day!" (P3). In her husband's absence, she was not one to give up, but was clearly seen to cope, stating that she was "the boss" and making it clear that it had been her choice to stay in Upton, rather than moving quarter to be with her husband (P3). Whilst the family had a close relationship with Mrs Carter's parents, they only came down to visit the family "once a term," according to Nick (N4), so they would not have been able to rely on them for support.

Mrs Gordon appeared to be similarly able to cope with her life at Upton. Her use of language also implied that she was dominant, "I won't stay here and look after his children that have problems, that need him here" (P2). However, it would be wrong to describe Mrs Gordon as being a part of the army. On the day that she was first interviewed, she had commented that she "wasn't one of those wives that wears their husband's rank on her sleeve" (Fn 18/9). She had also stated that she didn't have "much to do with the army." Like Mrs Carter, Mrs Gordon had decorated their quarter, re-painting the walls and putting up her own curtains. Like Mrs Carter, this, too, might indicate that she wanted to own the space that they were living in. Mrs Gordon's support, however, did not come from the army. Since she lived close to her family, they were only 10 miles away, she would rely on them for support. Shelley talked about her extended family members in an interview, indicating that she saw them (S2).

Mrs Hobson and Mrs Turner appeared to be the most troubled in their relationship towards the army. Mrs Hobson had said that she was an alcoholic and had intimated that this was connected to the difficulties she had experienced with Del's real father (P4). Mrs Hobson had moved in with her parents when she first had Del and admitted that she "really missed" them now that they were not living together. Indeed, leaving the UK to move on to another posting put her in a real quandary because she stated that she really didn't want to leave her mother behind (Fn 15/6). When her father died, Mrs Hobson approached the Regimental Welfare Office and arranged for her husband to be brought back from Iraq on compassionate leave, because she was unable to cope (Fn 7/5). When she first arrived in Upton, she saw her new quarter and cried her "eyes out" (P4). She had mentioned that she didn't much like the army and had not fitted into life at Upton terribly well (Fn 3/3) so was very much looking forward to leaving and moving on to another posting. When the regiment had Family Days, the family did not attend them. Mrs Hobson took some trouble to re-decorate and individualise their quarter. In Del's photographs, there are several pictures of some of the decorating that she has done. Del commented that, "she changes it all around once in a while" (D4). Mrs Hobson was clearly not overawed by the army system. Del had recently joined army cadets and had asked her to inspect his bedroom. She commented that she had found this "hilarious" (Fn 3/3) rather than being proud that he wanted to join his step-father in the Forces.

Mrs Turner was openly hostile towards the army, claiming that, "the whole welfare system stinks to high heaven" (P1). When the children were younger she had mentioned that when her husband "was away, I had six months at home with three young children under five, and I had no support system, I just got on with it. There was no one" (P1). She admitted that she had seen a Health Visitor in Germany and that the family were now being supported by a Social Worker because of her younger son's difficulties. When she was visited for an initial interview, it was clear how upset she felt about the way she perceived she had been treated by the army. She became tearful when she described the difficulties her children had in Germany (Fn 18/9). Unlike the other wives, Mrs Turner had not chosen to put her own mark on her house. She made use of the army's curtains and had not decorated. Tellingly, Mrs Turner had commented that, "wherever you go, you take your problems with you," (P1) suggesting that this had, indeed, been the case for the Turners and that, as a family, they had a lot of

issues to contend with. Mrs Turner had mentioned that she had been involved in what she described as "backstabbing" when her husband was at regimental duty as some of the other army wives had become verbally abusive towards her. This name-calling had also spread to the children of soldiers in the regiment, so the Turners were "happy" when they moved away to another garrison town (P1).

The lifestyle that the families lived was clearly hard. The Hobsons and the Gordons endured six months of absence during the research project, when Sergeant Gordon and Lance Corporal Hobson were deployed to Iraq. This necessitated six months of absence from the serving soldier, but also six months of increased anxiety as the families worried what was happening in Iraq. The Carters existed as a family unit only at weekends, resulting in Mrs Carter being without a car during the week and having to rely on friends to drive her around. During the research project, they had to change their holiday plans as Sergeant Carter's duty patterns were changed at the last minute. The Turners had moved from the country that they considered to be 'home' and were having difficulties with racist attacks at their house. Whilst these experiences are very different, what was similar was the families' reactions to the situation that they were in. They met the hard-times with a sense of acceptance and, sometimes, impotence.

The Hobsons appeared to accept the impact of the army in their lives. Although Mrs Hobson claimed not to be happy in Upton, her husband's job was viewed with a sense of normality. One of Del's photographs showed his younger brother dressed up in his father's uniform and webbing. Del claimed that it was his father who had dressed the boy up in the first place (D4). There was nothing unusual about seeing a child dressed up as a soldier. In fact Del could only comment that his brother was, "saluting all wrong" (D4). Mrs Carter also seemed to accept the exigencies of army life. She mentioned that she hoped that they didn't move on to Northern Ireland after Upton because there would not be any jobs for her children there (Fn 25/9). This was said without anger, rather it was said with a sense of resignation if it did, in fact, happen.

Mrs Gordon, who had appeared to be so independent of the army, claiming that she would not move due to the children's education, eventually appeared to give in and accept the army's impact on her family life. She changed her mind from being adamant that she would stay in Upton, to resigning herself to moving to

Germany with her husband. She commented that she felt better about going to Germany than Northern Ireland because she perceived Northern Ireland to be something of a prison. She claimed that she was going to stay in her quarter until Shelley had taken her SATs (Fn 28/6). However, contact with the school the year afterwards revealed that either Mrs Gordon had given in, or her request for a retention of their quarter had been turned down because the family moved on just before Shelley's exams.

Mrs Turner, of all the mums, was the most openly hostile towards the army. Yet underneath her hostility was a sense of impotence. After all their movement in Germany and, then, back to England, Mrs Turner considered that, "all these years I was just a number but for once, I wanted to be treated like an individual" (P1). She had seen the impact that the education system in Germany had had on her children and hoped for better. She went on to demonstrate that she accepted what had happened to them, "I have to make the compromises all the time, so I guess we'll stay here. If I was silly enough to marry him, I just have to get on with it" (P1). The sense of "getting on with it" indicated her acceptance that things would not change and that she was part of the wider army system. Mrs Turner was not the only person to consider that part of an army dependents role was to 'get on with' and accept the lot that they had. Mrs Carter commented that Nick should "get on with" being at school, when he had complained of being bullied (P3). Whilst Mrs Hobson felt that her younger sons would also need to "get on with" the business of starting out at school (P4). Meanwhile, one of the parents who attended the army parents group interview agreed that, in Germany, there was a sense of 'getting on with' what they had over there because there was little choice about where to educate their children (P5). Another parent at that same group interview considered that a positive aspect of his child's education to date had been the fact that he was able to walk into a new school and just "get on with it" (P5).

2 – RELATING THESE THEMES TO LITERATURE

The findings showed that all four children achieved below the expected level of achievement in their Key Stage Two English examinations (the DfES' expected level of achievement being level four for all SATs examinations). In Mathematics, Del was the only child to achieve the nationally expected level. In Science, Del

achieved above the expected level whilst Nick achieved the expected level. Both of the girls achieved below the expected level in Mathematics and Science. The concern that service children might have lower levels of attainment was considered by Williams (1971) whose examination of historical records had concluded that the link between a service lifestyle and a child's ability to achieve at school had been mentioned for the first time in the House of Commons in 1955. Spencer's review of army welfare provision (1976: 432) was more pronounced in its conclusion that the mobility of a service lifestyle impacted on a child's social development, their ability to learn and, ultimately, to that child's "overall educational attainment." More recently, research by Strand (2002) has concluded that mobility during a child's early years of compulsory schooling might be connected to lower levels of pupil attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Marchant's small-scale study (2002) of one year's cohort of army and civilian students showed that there were no significant differences in numeracy levels but that there was some concern regarding the literacy levels of the army intake. Mackay and Spicer, however, concluded in 1975 that the difference in attainment might well be due to people's perceptions of service children and might not be indicative of any impact caused by mobility.

In all of the children, it was clear to see that the experience of moving schools did have a negative impact on them. All of the children had attended at least four schools since the beginning of year one. Whilst Del, Nick and Shelley all described the experience as making them feel "nervous," Katie talked about it being "really hard." In all cases, moving schools was considered from a social perspective, that is to say the experience of making and losing friends, rather than from an academic perspective, with the children worrying about having to catch up on work or having to do the same work all over again. These experiences are mirrored in the work of both Keller (2001) and Tyler (2002). Keller, specifically, commented that, "the emotional issues trump the academic transition" (2001: 99). Measor and Woods' earlier work (1984) had similar findings and suggested that the 'informal' passage into school, or the 'insider' knowledge, was more difficult to adapt to. In the case of Katie, particularly, coming from Germany to the UK, her passage into school would have been more bewildering given her previous experiences of life in another country.

A further impact of mobility can be seen particularly in the cases of Del, Katie and Shelley. All three children had a history of high mobility within their educational experiences, having attended at least four schools. As a result, perhaps, their special educational needs were diagnosed late. Del's SEN assessment took place towards the end of year five at his third school. For Shelley, this was when she moved into year six at her fourth school and for Katie shortly before she left Germany and transferred back to the UK. Added to this was the fact all of the children's school files were incomplete, failing to contain information from all of the schools that the children had attended. Galton (2000) and Ofsted (2002a) both considered that the quick and complete transfer of information about a student was key to the good management of pupil mobility. This issue was further highlighted by Nicholls and Gardner (1999) who considered that the quick transfer of information would be important in ensuring that teaching and learning could continue in a new school. Perhaps as a result of this mobility and the failure to transfer information about previous experiences, Del, Katie and Shelley did indeed have their SEN diagnosed later than should be the case.

In line with research conducted by Hutchinson (2004), the BBC (2001) and the AFJ (2001) both Mrs Carter and Mrs Hobson experienced difficulties getting their sons into their school of choice as this school was already full up. This resulted in several weeks of waiting until a place became available. Mrs Carter admitted that she had chosen to send Nick and his brother to Upton School because that was the choice that everyone within the army seemed to be making. She was aware that there were difficulties at the school but always chose to send her boys where 'the majority' of neighbours' children went (P3) in a way that mirrored the research by Keller (2001). For the Gordons and the Turners, the choice of school for Shelley and Katie was based upon what was practical for them. Moving Shelley from the nearby town to Charterhouse School in Upton and then on to Upton School meant that travel arrangements were easy (S2). Shelley could have remained at her primary school in the nearby town, resulting in less disruption to her education but this would have involved organising a fifteen minute car trip each way to get her to school and back. Katie, too, was sent to the 'local school' as transport to and from school was provided. Lacey (1970: 189) theorised that practical decisions, rather than those based on his use of 'deferred gratification' were common in working class families.

It might be said that all of the parents' previous poor experiences of education might have made them de-value and fail to engage with education. Crozier (2000) felt that working class parents might fail to get involved in their children's education because they could not access the education system rather than not wanting to access the system. This was based on the cultural and social experiences of the working class family that would deny them the self-confidence with which to approach schools. Vincent (1996) concluded that parents could be indicative of a particular 'type' of parental involvement, and suggested that parents might be 'independent' of their child's education. Given the range of difficulties that Mrs Hobson and Mrs Turner experienced, it is not difficult to understand that they had other things going on in their lives that made them unable to engage more fully in their child's education and preferred to maintain a distance from this. Mrs Gordon, unlike the other mothers, did make use of some of her local, civilian contacts in order to arrange for Shelley to tour Charterhouse Primary before she went there for the first time. This would, undoubtedly, have helped Shelley to settle in. Unlike other army families (Keller, 2001) the Gordons could rely on local contacts and this made the passage into their new life at Upton easier. With regard to involvement in schooling, on leaving school, Mrs Carter had embarked on a job within the early-years sector and recent training and development had resulted in her promotion to nursery supervisor. As a result, she had some professional standing within the education world and might have felt more confident about entering into the 'world' of the boys' schooling (Crozier, 2000). She was also active within the home and supported Nick and his brother when they completed their homework.

Considering this social side of schooling may also be a way of explaining why Del, Nick, Katie and Shelley had lower than expected literacy levels. As Galton, Grey and Rudduck suggested (1999) difficulties within the social experience of schooling might lead to lowered attainment levels. Katie's description of feeling "sick" because of her exposure to British air might well be a more physical manifestation of what Butcher (2002) described as "disenfranchised grief," whereby children who have only experienced life in one country move to another (their supposed 'home' country) and feel like they do not belong. Certainly, Anderson et al. (2000) considered that girls were more vulnerable at transition time which might explain why Katie's experiences appeared to be more extreme than the other children's.

For all of the children there was something of a 'fluidity' in their relationships with their friends, to a greater or lesser degree. Del started off year eight by describing his best friend as someone he had known at primary school who had only recently moved away. He also mentioned his friendship with Nick and Steven. However, soon after, he fell out with Nick and Steven and started to be friendly with another boy who had not even been mentioned up to that point. Similarly, Shelley, who appeared to have such a strong relationship with her friend Suzy, also experienced a falling-out and finished year eight with no real friends of her own. Although Katie's relationship with Alison lasted throughout year eight, she hinted that they had not been good friends the year before and suggested in her final interview that she found it easier to make friends with new students rather than maintaining existing relationships. This suggested that these less intense, less intimate friendships were easier for her. The only student whose friendship appeared to survive the year was Nick's friendship with Steven. However, even Nick described how all was not entirely well as he showed a complete lack of empathy and understanding with Steven's home situation when his father was posted to Basra. Spencer (1976) described how army children tended to have "acquaintances" rather than true friendships, since their mobility made it impossible for them to maintain friendships with other children. Darnauer (1976), Jeffreys and Leitzel (2000) and Pollock and Van Reken (2001) all suggested, however, that more superficial friendships were as a result of a more conscious decision on the part of army child to remain detached. Darnauer considered this to be a "protective measure" so that army children would be spared the pain of saying goodbye to friends when moving on. Certainly in the cases of Shelley and Del, who were aware in year eight that they would probably be posted away in year nine, their more fluid examples of friendships might well be because of their need to protect themselves.

Del and Nick maintained military friends only – their 'close' male friends were from an army background. Out of all of the children involved in the research Del was the most enthusiastic about the army, generally, and wanted to join up when he left school. The army was very much a part of his identity. Nick had a very close friendship with one boy only, to the near exclusion of other potential friendships (N4). His friend, Steven, also came from a military background. Steven had admitted that he found civilian friendships difficult because civilians didn't really understand the army lifestyle (E14). Whilst Nick was not exactly enthusiastic

about the army the army was still a part of his identity. Darnauer (1976) and Black (1984) suggested that being a part of a service community was an all-consuming and central part of a military family's life and identity. Montalvo (1976) also suggested that army families felt isolated from civilian communities. It is reasonable to suggest that both Nick and Del might choose to spend their time with someone who understood that part of their identity. Del, particularly, seemed to be unable to or did not want to separate his military home life from his friendships at school. Derrington and Kendall's suggestion (2004) that there might be a cultural clash between traveller children and the stable community might be indicative of the boys – perhaps he was more suspicious of civilian children and, thus, kept the company of other military children? For Nick, losing and making friends was the most difficult thing of all about moving schools - he describes the experience as 'shocking' (N1). This falls very much in line with both Keller (2001) and Tyler (2002) who suggested that, in spite of everything, the social problems associated with moving schools were more important to military children than anything else.

Turning, now, to the girls' friendships. Suzy, Shelley's best friend, did not come from an army background. Indeed, it was often difficult to ascertain to what extent the army had any impact on Shelley's life as she seemed to be so detached from it. Like the army girl interviewed as part of the pupil interview group (E14) Shelley, it seemed, did not actively seek army contacts and, perhaps, preferred the friendship of civilian girls. Darnauer (1976) considered girls to be more at risk of having friendships affected by mobility, whilst Anderson et al. (2000) also considered that girls were more vulnerable at transition time. It might be that Shelley's preference for one strong friendship with a civilian girl was a way of trying to avoid the impact of mobility. Suzy, as a civilian, would be more likely to remain in Upton than an army girl, whilst investing in one friendship alone would help Shelley to avoid having to make friends over and over again with several people. Shelley, therefore, seemingly goes against the work of Darnauer (1976) and Black (1984) who suggested that being a part of a service community was an all-consuming and central part of a military family's life and identity. Whilst Shelley's experiences were undoubtedly affected by her service 'experiences' she did not identify with the army. This might partly be due to the fact that she had been unable to form a close bond with her step-father and also by her mother's dislocation from the support of the service community. A move away from Upton,

to a posting away from her extended family, might result in a stronger army identity being formed. Katie, had one particular friend, Alison, with whom she had developed a seemingly imbalanced power relationship. Katie appeared to prefer being dominated by Alison. A member of staff had suggested that this was because Katie had never spent long enough in one place to develop the correct social skills to be able to challenge this (E8). It is also possible that Katie's experiences at home with her family had made her seek out this more dominant friendship with Alison as a means of compensating for the ambivalent attachment she had formed with her mother (Ainsworth et al. 1978). Katie had appeared to favour forming friendships with new students rather than trying to develop existing friendships (K4). Spencer (1976) suggested that mobility made it impossible for army children to develop anything other than superficial acquaintances, which is certainly possible in the case of Katie. However, the research conducted by Jeffreys and Leitzel (2000) and Pollock and Van Reken (2001) suggests that wanting more superficial friendships is something of an active choice on the part of army children – they do not want to become any closer to their peers for fear of being hurt when they have to say goodbye.

This sense of detachment in relationships was also evident in all of the children's relationships with their teachers as none of them were able to name a favourite teacher. It could also be seen in the children's varying lack of involvement in lessons and all of the children's insistence that they would not confide in teachers if they had a problem, although Katie and Shelley said they might talk to a teacher if they had a problem at school, but not at home. Keson (1991) suggested that painful and re-occurring experiences are 'numbed' by students as a way of dealing with negative feelings. As such, Katie, Shelley, Nick and Del might have more actively disconnected from their learning relationships with teachers as a way of coping with their constant change in teaching staff. Indeed, Katie's comment, that she liked her music teacher because she had said she would stay at the school for a long time, suggests that this might well be true as it highlighted Katie's need for stability. Pollock and Van Reken's description of a mobile child's sense of rootlessness and restlessness (2001) might well also apply to these children's relationships with their teachers, as well as their friends.

Both Nick and Del used similar language to describe why they would not talk to teachers (both indicating that they had a lack of trust for them). This suggests

that, particularly in the case of the boys, they saw the teachers as the 'other' and somehow different to them. A study of literature suggests two possible reasons for this detachment. Firstly, there is evidence that the difference in identity between the military and civilian communities might lead to mistrust – as explored above in relation to the boys' friendships. If we also extend Derrington and Kendall's (2004) suggestion (that there is a cultural clash between the traveller community and their more 'fixed' counterparts which results in suspicion on the part of travellers about what schools are trying to achieve) to military families, we can see how the military identity of Del and Nick in particular might well put them not only at odds with their (civilian) peers but also their (civilian) teachers.

The second reason for this detachment and mistrust might well focus on the teacher perspective rather than the student. Keller (2001) suggested that many educators did not have an experience of mobility or the military in their own lives so could not, therefore, understand these aspects of service children's lifestyles. This is echoed more generally by Wolfendale (1992), German (1996), Kiddle (1999), Reynolds et al. (2003) and Derrington and Kendall (2004). Wolfendale and German both commented that teachers needed to be sensitive to *any* family difference in order to understand how to respond to this in their own classroom. Kiddle, Reynolds et al. and Derrington and Kendall, all researching the experience of traveller children, commented that there might well be a misunderstanding on the part of schools and teachers about what traveller families wanted for their children. The theme apparent in all three pieces of research was that schools did not understand the communities that they served. Considering both reasons, therefore, it is possible to conclude that Nick, Del, Shelley and Katie were detached (from their friends, their teachers and their lessons) both because of their own responses to their identities and mobility but also as a result of their schools and teachers' responses to this.

Shelley's mother claimed that Shelley needed to have good relationships with her teachers in order to make progress at school (P2). Shelley confirmed this when talking about the reason she disliked History was because she didn't like the teacher. (S2) Katie, too, considered that a teacher needed to be 'friendly' in order to be good at their job. (K2) And yet this need for friendliness and a good social relationship was not visible in Katie or Shelley. They were unable to mention the name of a favourite teacher at any of the schools that they had

previously attended and did not describe the schools using personal pronouns, indicating that she felt no sense of belonging at any of them. (K2 and S2) All this might indicate that, whilst personal relationships were important to the girls, they had not experienced this in their education history. A possible reason might be their educational mobility, which had prevented them from spending any significant amount of time at one school, thus preventing them from becoming friendly with teachers. Keson (1991) describes army students detaching from relationships with people around them (both friends and teachers) as a means of 'numbing themselves' from the pain of having to say goodbye over and over again. It may be that both the girls, in spite of needing good relationships to make progress, sought to protect themselves and, so, failed to make good working relationships with teachers at all. Essentially, then, whilst they appeared to value relationships with teachers, really she was detached from the process of learning. The focus on their relationships with teachers, rather than their own learning, is also indicative of Keller (2001) and Tyler (2002) who suggested that, in spite of everything, the social problems associated with moving schools were more important to military children than anything else. In the case of Katie, It is possible that she had developed the need to help teachers as a coping strategy, so she could deflect the attention away from her difficulties in the classroom and, yet, still be seen to be a 'good student'.

In spite of this detachment, none of the children could be described as being badly behaved in class. All of them were polite to members of staff and appeared to follow instructions. Both Price (2002) and Jeffreys and Leitzel (2000) compared the behaviour of civilian and military children and concluded that army children were better behaved. Price suggested this could be due to the disruption in friendships caused by mobility (resulting in the service children having more superficial friendships in which it would not be possible to 'test' the boundaries of behaviour) or because the Military placed normative constraints on service children. McCubbin and Dahl (1976) (also mirrored in Wertsch, 1991) concluded that older military children became more responsible and were more likely to be seen to 'do the right thing.' Pollock and Van Reken (2001), meanwhile, suggested that military children would feel more obliged to hide negative emotions due to the 'brave' culture of the army. In the case of Del, this might be especially apparent. When Del was asked about his feelings towards the army, his answers seemed

overly positive, as if he was trying to deny that the army might have any negative impact upon his life.

The sense of being overly responsible, explored in the paragraph above, could also be seen in three of the children's relationships with their mothers. Del complained once that he felt too responsible whilst his father was away as he had to look after his mother. Nick, too, mentioned that he did not like to spend any time away from home. Shelley was acutely aware of the impact of her step-brothers' behaviour on her mother whilst her step-father was on tour in Basra and tried to hide things from her mother in order to protect her. Spencer (1976) had commented that the stability of the family depended, to a fair extent, on the ability and motivation of the army mother to come to terms with the impact of turbulence. Of all of the children, Katie was the only one to have her father at home for the majority of the study. This might explain why she did not display any outward signs of being concerned for her mother. Katie's mum, however, did mention how Katie had become more introverted when her father was deployed when she was little.

The impact of a father's absence was most visible, therefore, in Del, Shelley and Nick. Del, as already mentioned, had to become the 'man of the house,' a position which he slightly resented and which forced him to take an awful lot of time off school. In the lead up to his father's deployment, Del's behaviour at school was punctuated by outbursts which were noticed by teaching staff. Shelley, on the other hand, did not 'act out' her concerns for her step-father, but seemed to become more withdrawn and anxious, worrying particularly about her mother. Her step-brother, who attended the same school, became so erratic that staff started to gather information about him with a view to seeking external help. Nick, on the other hand, experienced something near to stability in his father's absence. Nick's father had been posted away from home for so long that the family were used to the situation, to the extent that Nick's mother admitted she ruled the household and was the one 'in control'. Spencer (1976) had commented that the teachers in his study were able to tell when their students' fathers had been deployed. This was because students became either more aggressive (like Del), truanted or became more withdrawn (like Shelley). Both McCubbin and Dahl (1976) and Watanabe and Jensen (2000) suggested that longer periods of father absence were better than shorter periods as these allowed families to adapt to the

absence, which, along with Nick's mum's strength of character, might explain why Nick's family appeared to cope with Sergeant Carter's absence so well.

All of the parents interviewed expressed a strong opinion against a boarding school education for their child. This resonates with Lacey's concept of "deferred gratification" (1970, explored above) in that none of the parents considered the more idealistic outcomes of a boarding school education (for example, stability in learning). This is a theme that is also evident in other examples of research. Both Jolly (1987) and Keller (2001) suggested that army parents needed the support of their children providing, "the solid consistency in an inconsistent world." (Keller, 2001: 98) In the case of Mrs Hobson, who openly admitted the extent to which she relied on Del, this is particularly true. Jolly suggested, further, that a concern about the impact of turbulence on a child's education was more likely to be "pronounced amongst the high flyers than amongst the plodders of the military world." (Jolly, 1987: 34) None of the fathers of the students in the research had attained a rank higher than Sergeant suggesting that they might be the "plodders" which Jolly described. As a result, their decision not to consider a boarding school education could be indicative of their rank and might suggest that making choices outside of what was expected of them would be very difficult. Jolly further described the military assumption that the "offspring of 'officers and gentlemen'" (p13) would go to boarding school. It might be very difficult for a soldier, therefore, to challenge these assumptions and make a choice for his/her family that would put him/her at odds with everyone around him.

3 –ANALYSIS OF EACH CHILD

In this section, the theme of family is explored as this is unique to each child. Each child's situation is then related to literature as a means of deepening our understanding of the individual child.

Del

Beginning with the theme of family, we can see how close Del had become to his mother. This had started at a very early age as Del's mum had brought him up single-handedly. By looking at the theories of attachment (Bowlby, 1969; Ainsworth et al, 1978; Main and Solomon, 1986) it is possible to understand why Del's relationship with his mother had developed in the way that it had. As they

were alone together for much of Del's early childhood, they formed a close bond. However, as Del's mother related, she often turned to her parents for help as she found bringing up a child single-handedly very difficult. It is likely that Del might have been able to sense her feelings of inadequacy and, in doing so, felt panicked and fearful as a result. Main and Solomon (1986) identified the disorganised pattern of attachment which is resonant of Del's reactions, stating that children became unpredictable if they could sense fear and disorganisation within their primary carer. The intensity of his relationship with his mother can only have added to this sense of fearfulness – he had only one parent to rely on so would have invested all of his emotional energy in her. Schofield (2002) discusses how children with more secure patterns of attachment can do better at school and go on to form secure relationships with teachers and peers. It may well be that Del's inability to do this (see later discussion) stemmed from his early experiences with his mother. Both Jolly (1987) and Keller (2001) explain how dependent army parents can become of their children. For the parent who moves frequently, children represent the one consistent part of their life. It is understandable, therefore, that Del and his mum had come to depend on each other so much.

Del was described as the "man about the house" (P4) and listed all the things he did to help his mum out when his step-father was away. He clearly felt very responsible and described how he felt he needed to be near the house in case anything went wrong. This sense of (over) responsibility amongst military children is common in military child welfare literature (McCubbin and Dahl, 1976; Wertsch, 1991) but can also be seen in literature that focuses on the experiences of the military family more generically. Both Chandler (1991) and Rosen and Durand (2000) commented that military families had two ways of coping when the serving parent was posted away from home. Either, they left the role of the parent 'open' for the parent to return to, or an older child would take on many of the parent's roles and responsibilities. In Del's case, given his long-established close relationship with his mother, Del chose to take on many of his step-father's jobs around the home. His description of the reunion scene painted him as hanging back from the proceedings. The fact that he had to become the 'man about the house' might suggest that there was some sort of resentment towards his father, returning to the role that Del had just vacated

It was clear that Mrs Hobson found it difficult to cope with army life – she recounted that she found the move to Upton very difficult and disclosed that she was an alcoholic. Spencer (1976) had assessed that the stability of an army family depended on the ability and motivation of the army mother to come to terms with the impact of turbulence. Added to this was the fact that Lance Corporal Hobson's absences were many and often. Both McCubbin and Dahl (1976) and Watanabe and Jensen (2000) concluded that soldier absences were better for a family if they took place over long periods of time. Whilst Lance Corporal Hobson was often away from home, up until his deployment to Basra his absences were short (a few weeks at a time), resulting in the family never quite having the chance to fully adjust to him being away. This situation was compounded by Mrs Hobson's sense of detachment from the army - she commented that she did not have many close friends within the army. Montalvo (1976) had assessed that 'mutual help' was a tradition of the army. By not involving herself in army life, Mrs Hobson was, effectively, distancing herself from the support she could get from other wives in a similar position.

Nick

Nick had a strong relationship with his mother. Nick commented that if there was anything wrong, he would get his mum to 'sort it out' for him. (N2) His relationship with his mother appeared to be settled and most resembled the 'secure' attachment patterns outlined by Ainsworth et al. (1978) whereby Nick was able to exist beyond his relationship with his mother and settled quickly into other social areas (for example, school). The one statement made by Nick's mum that might contradict this assertion slightly was when Mrs Carter commented that Nick found it difficult to spend the night away from home and had telephoned to be picked up from friends' houses rather than sleeping over. (P3) This might suggest that Nick was less secure in his relationship with his mother than at first seen. However, it might be that this was more indicative of Nick's relationship with the army, rather than his parents. It was at this time that Nick, in an interview, had revealed that he was now worried that the family would be moving on again – he had seen his mum painting their quarter. This suggested that he felt fearful about moving (and was insecure as a result) and had begun to feel unsettled. Adam, Sheldon Keller and West (2000) suggested that the loss of the family home (and Nick had lived in Upton longer than any other quarter) was also likely to lead to "disorientation and confusion" (p330) as children often related their

attachment figures to the surroundings. As such, Nick's insecurity was not focused around his primary carer (his mother) but more around the situation within which his family lived.

Nick's father was posted permanently away from the family home (with the family maintaining a quarter in Upton so that the boys might experience some stability in their education). As a result, the sole parental focus, for Nick, was his mum. She openly admitted that she was the 'boss' (P3) around the house and that her husband was not very strict with the children. Mrs Carter was, evidently, extremely capable. She managed the family home, went out to work herself and clearly coped during the absences from her husband. As Sergeant Carter's absences were now long-term (McCubbin and Dahl (1976) and Watanabe and Jensen [2000]), it is possible to see how the family had adapted to his absence by filling his place and managing well without him (Chandler (1991) and Rosen and Durand [2000]). Mrs Carter was indicative of Spencer's assertion (1976) that much depended on the ability and motivation of the army mother to come to terms with the impact of turbulence.

Mrs Carter was so able to cope, it seems, because her own background was military. Her father had been in the army, so moving around was all that she had known. Black (1984) had commented that the service community was an all-consuming part of the military family's life and identity. As Mrs Carter had been brought up within this community, she perhaps identified more strongly with the army than any of the other mothers. Out of all the mums in the study, Mrs Carter was the most involved in army life and had an active social life that revolved around the regiment. She also provided support to other wives and showed that she was clearly a part of the regimental support network. Montalvo's (1976) tradition of 'mutual help' was a reality for Mrs Carter. An interview towards the end of the study revealed that Nick was not happy with the army (he had commented that the army gave him a 'dull face', N4) although he chose not to pursue this comment any further. As the army was such a huge part of the family identity, he might have felt uncomfortable being openly disloyal to the family situation.

Shelley

Shelly was extremely close to her mother. This had started at a very early age as she had been brought up by her mum single-handedly after her parents had separated. It is possible to understand why Shelley's relationship with her mother had developed in the way that it had. As they were alone together for much of Shelley's early childhood, they had formed a close bond. When Mrs Gordon had met and married Sergeant Gordon, Mrs Gordon had commented that Shelley had never really had the chance to bond with him as he was away from home so often (P2) as a result he was not really like a 'father or a step-father to her'. Although she maintained contact with her real father, he lived over two hours away so she saw him infrequently. Her main attachment figure, therefore, was Mrs Gordon alone. All of Shelley's emotional activity, therefore, was invested in her mother. Shelley talked of wanting to protect her mother and hide bad news from her (Fn 25/11) displaying some of the signs of the 'avoidant attachment' patterns of Bowlby (1969). This had evolved not out of Mrs Gordon ignoring Shelley (although Mrs Gordon did admit that she had had 'so much going on in [her] life' when she had separated from her first husband (P2) which might have contributed to Shelley's sense of unease) but rather out of Shelley's over-investment in her relationship with her mother.

Sergeant Gordon's absences were many and regular. As mentioned above, Mrs Gordon already felt that this had had an impact on Shelley's ability to form a relationship with him. Both McCubbin and Dahl (1976) and Watanabe and Jensen (2000) asserted that it was easier for a family to adapt to absence if it was long-term and it is possible to see how Shelley (and particularly her step-brothers) found it difficult to adapt to Sergeant Gordon's tours of duty. For Shelley's step-brothers, their father's absences were particularly difficult to bear and both Shelley and Mrs Gordon recounted the ways in which the boys had reacted aggressively and negatively to their father being away. (S4, P2) Mrs Gordon, however, continued to cope extremely well whilst her husband was away. She mentioned that she did not rely on army contacts for support (Fn 18/9) as she had her family close by. Spencer asserted (1976) that much depended on the ability and motivation of the army mother to come to terms with the impact of turbulence. Mrs Gordon, therefore, had come to terms with the army life through the support of her family. She remained fairly stable throughout her husband's absences as a result. However, her ability to cope must be called into question if she was ever to

be posted away from her support network in the Upton area. Without them, she might not be able to remain so stable in the absence of Sergeant Gordon.

Katie

Katie had a difficult relationship with her mother and her family. At school, teaching assistants had spoken about their concern that Katie and her twin sister, Sarah, were very hostile towards each other (Fn, 23/1). Her older brother, Bruno, did not play a strong part in her life and her younger brother, Max, was away from home at boarding school. Mrs Turner, Katie's mum, admitted that, as a family, they had not had much time for Katie as the family's focus had been on Max, trying to get him into school. (P1) Mrs Turner had also admitted that she didn't have to worry about Sarah in the same way that she did the rest of her children which suggested that she might favour Sarah above the others. Mrs Turner's attitude towards Katie seemed to be dismissive, suggesting that Katie should just "toughen up" when it came to problems at school. (P1) As a result of this family situation, Katie often expressed her anger at home, by flying into a rage and running up to her room. (P1) At school, her teaching assistants wondered whether Katie was enjoying the focus on her that her involvement in this research had created and whether this had resulted in her sister acting up. (Fn 9/3) This pattern of family relationships has many similarities with the ambivalent attachment pattern outlined by Ainsworth et al. (1978). This suggested that caregivers who were inconsistent in their care resulted in children acting out in order to gain the attention of their carer. In a family where the focus had openly been on the youngest son and his difficulties, it may have appeared to Katie that the only way she could attract her mother's attention was to act out at home and experience difficulties at school.

Mrs Turner was extremely angry towards the army and intimated that the army was responsible for many of the problems that the family had. She talked about the educational difficulties of her youngest son and how these had not been acted on by the army education system in Germany. She also mentioned the special needs of Katie and how these had not been properly assessed in Germany. She was also dismissive of the regimental system and was angry that she felt she had been ostracised from the regiment because of a falling out with some of the other wives. (P1) Spencer (1976) had assessed that the stability of an army family depended on the ability and motivation of the army mother to come to terms with

the impact of turbulence. It appears that Mrs Turner was not coping with the army system – at interview, she was tearful (Fn 18/9) and had related how she thought the whole army welfare system "stinks". (P1) Now that the family were living in Pilton, they were not in the same quarter area as the other wives in the regiment. As a result, Mrs Turner would have been unable to 'access' the support of the other army wives as outlined by Montalvo (1976). However, not being able to tap into the 'mutual help' was as much due to living in Pilton (a decision made by somebody in the Housing Executive) as Mrs Turner wishing to distance herself from the support she could get from other wives in a similar position.

Chapter Six - The Wider Findings

In this chapter, the research findings generated beyond the cases of the four children are described and explored. The findings from Upton are contrasted with the findings from Alchester. The themes relating to the day to day experiences of education of army children are explored first – curriculum issues, attainment, and special educational needs. Generic themes of then looked at - conflict, boarding school education, funding issues, admissions, file issues and isolation. These themes are then related to relevant literature.

1 –THEMES EMERGING AT A SCHOOL, LOCAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL

Curriculum issues

At Upton School there were clear difficulties within the curriculum caused by mobility and the army experience. Timetable constraints meant that the school was only able to offer German at Key Stage Four level, so that students lower down the school could only practise the language at an after-school club. For students transferring from army schools in Germany to Upton, this would limit a learning experience already begun overseas. For students transferring out to Germany, this could mean that they went unprepared for learning German in SCE schools and for the wider cultural experience of living in Germany. The school had, nonetheless, tried to take into account in some curriculum areas the transient nature of their pupils. In Science, for example, the school had adopted a 'spiral curriculum' so that topics were revisited every year in increasing depth. In this way, students new to the school would be assured some input into each topic area every year. However, the school's science co-ordinator had revealed that, "the kids got bored doing the same thing every year and it wasn't stretching them enough," (E7) so the department had been advised to change their curriculum. Whilst in some subjects (history, for example) teachers created workbooks that pupils could take away with them (which would give them a resource to work on at home if they had not studied a particular area) other curriculum areas were not well resourced and could not afford to give students text books (for example, French and English).

At Alchester, in the History department, there had been a change in curriculum. The previous curriculum had also been studied by the army schools in Germany, but the new one (which was alleged "to be an easier course to pass" [A3]) would

not be helpful to students transferring to the school. French and German were offered at Key Stage Three, where teachers commented that, increasingly, students' previous language experiences were not being taken into account when setting was being organised. Thus, students who had come over from Germany, who had previously studied German, might find themselves being put into a year 9 French class with no previous experience of learning French. (Fn 5/4/05)

Around the schools it became clear that the presence of the army was not being felt, if sometimes ignored. In the careers library, there were no information sheets on careers in the armed forces, whilst displays around the schools made little mention of the presence of the army in the surrounding area. (Fn 13/11, Fn 4/04/05) In lessons, there was no sense of teachers 'tapping into' the army experience of pupils. For example, one ex-army officer who taught at the school confirmed that his experiences of working within the armed forces had not been asked about (Fn, 13/10). In several lessons, references to life overseas were made by teachers, but they did not ask pupils who had lived in Germany to comment further on this. (Obs 22/1, 28/4, S4) (Indeed, one teacher had commented, "in my lessons, probably not as much as I could do, I do try to talk about their interests and to talk about things to do with the army." [E6]) This was in contrast to one army father who commented that, during the first Gulf War, his daughter's school in Germany had done a project on Iraq, so that they would learn about the country and would feel that their experiences were being supported. (P5) This was an educational opportunity with a dual purpose. Furthermore, some cultural references made by teaching staff might have had little meaning to children who had spent extended periods of time abroad. Comments relating to place names in the UK (Fn 13/10, Ob 10/6) may have made little sense to the army children involved.

And yet the school did try to focus its pupils on targets that it had either not been there to help them achieve or would probably not be there to help them achieve in the future. In some lessons (Ob 10/6) the teachers referred back to work that the students were assumed had covered at Primary School as well as making links forward to examinations it was assumed would be taken at that school (Ob 5/4/05). Whilst making links back to their previous learning was an effective way of engaging the students in class, it also assumed that the students had, indeed, covered the work previously. In English (Ob 24/3) a teacher related the year eight

lesson to work that they would do for their English GCSE, casting their minds forward and helping them to focus on future targets. Sometimes students had not covered work at previous schools and this added to their lack of enjoyment of a subject. (Ob 8/12) Conversely, students might become disaffected and bored if they have to re-do work that they have already studied at a previous school:

> "it's a blow to a child's self-esteem when they're put back onto easy work until the already over-worked teacher can find time to accurately assess the newcomer and oh no NOT THE TUDORS AGAIN! [sic]" (Hutchinson, 2004)

One pupil had commented that when he had changed schools before he came to Upton he found the work too easy, so he "had to say, look I've done this before only a lot harder." (E14) In terms of human relationships, mobility also had an impact, "from the teaching staff's point of view it's not unsatisfactory but it's disappointing because they can't follow a product from year 7 to year 11. You get to know the strengths and weaknesses of that product and build up a relationship with them." (E9)

For examination classes, curriculum issues were particularly apparent at Upton. In English, students may not study the same Shakespeare text for their Key Stage Three exams as their GCSEs (E5) so students who arrive at Upton for Key Stage Four have to work by themselves with work set by their class teacher. For any student arriving mid-way through Key Stage Four the major issue was one of trying to match their existing option choices with those in the school, as well as making existing coursework meet new examination board requirements. The school's Key Stage Four Curriculum Manager commented:

> "You almost write them off. You know you put them in a class but they can't do well because there's no time for them to do the coursework that they've missed, or the module of work that they've missed." (E4)

All teachers mentioned Key Stage Four transfers as being a particular concern to them. Teachers tried to support students by photocopying work that they had missed and by providing extra tuition at lunchtime and after school, but it was pointed out that this depended on the student being committed enough to catch up on work and having support from home to do so. (E5) Teachers also commented that army students often came into the school and, when asked what

work they had missed, either denied that they had missed the work or claimed not to have known in the first place:

> "they [the pupils] are not interested, basically they say that they don't remember what they've done and that's all. What I need is for them to say, look, I haven't done that and I haven't done that, not, I can't remember what I've done." (E7 but also mirrored in E4 and E5)

The experiences at both schools reflected the frustration that army education experts felt nationally. One area of concern was at the different curriculum patterns within the UK now that devolved countries (Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales) had implemented their own education arrangements. The CEAS advisor's comment sums up many of the difficulties for army children,

> "when we talk about children moving around the UK, they could be moving to a different system. The National Curriculum is different, the age to move up to secondary school is different, the process of transfer to secondary school is different, in Northern Ireland it is still very much based on exam at entry. In Scotland, the outcomes at the end are very different they don't do GCSEs and A levels. And even though the DfES runs Wales and England and you could expect Wales and England to be similar, there are issues to do with the curriculum there to do with the teaching of Welsh, to do with their inspection regime and all sorts of things that are quite different to England." (O4)

Furthermore, it was commented by the AFF education specialist that, whilst schools obviously tried to assess students transferring to them, they could never "assess fully" (O6) as certain aspects of a student's development could only be understood over time. Both comments were mirrored in a debate in the House of Commons (Hansard, 2004, Col 80).

Attainment

Interviews with people within the study revealed that there was concern that an army lifestyle was having an impact on army children's ability to attain at school. Upton School had become concerned in the previous academic year that transience within the Key Stage Four cohort had affected students GCSE results. In History, GCSE results were much lower than end of Key Stage Three results had suggested, in spite of a clearly motivated group of students. Senior Management were concerned that movement into and out of the group within years 10 and 11 might have been the cause of this. (Fn 25/9) Certainly, it was

agreed that the level of special educational needs amongst service children in Southshire was higher than their civilian counterparts:

> "Of the 3,862 service children in [Southshire], 199 are either on a statement or a statement is expected for them shortly. In other words, 5.4% of military children are on statements. That compares with an average of 2% across England. That is a high percentage." (Hansard, 2004, Col 87)

At Upton, the four children involved in the research had low literacy scores. Senior Managers in both Alchester and Upton had commented that low literacy scores were quite common for army children, as moves during primary school had disrupted the child's learning to read and, thus, had resulted in the child failing to complete one single reading scheme or being able to have early intervention strategies put in place. (E1, A2)

The link between mobility and attainment is difficult to make. However, the researcher was able to reveal many aspects of a mobile lifestyle that might impact on a student's attainment. It was agreed in parliament (Hansard, 2004, Column 80) that target setting was inappropriate for the mobile child since it took a great deal of teacher time and energy to successfully integrate new children into classes and, furthermore, targets set for a child may not be able to be met at the same school. Conversely, schools might receive a new child and have to work with another school's assessment of that child's potential. The AFF Education specialist who had, herself, been a teacher at an army school in Germany commented that it was generally accepted by staff there that they had half of a child's time at the school to do anything 'significant' with the child. Postings normally occur every two years in the army, so for the first six months of that time, children would take time to settle into their new school. For the middle year, staff would find them receptive to work, whilst, for their final six months at the school, children would be thinking about their new posting and their work would tail off. (O6) An army parent had commented that his son was very bright and it had taken his school nearly four months to appreciate this. (P5) The parent had added, "if you go in there [into the school] and say, look my child is really bright, they say, oh look at him, blowing his own trumpet." Parents seemed unwilling to give schools all the relevant information and trusted them with their jobs.

A common theme from parents was the fact that sons found their father's absence difficult and often played up at school when their father was away, thus impacting on their ability to learn:

> "when I was in Iraq last year, I went away and it really did affect the children. My children started, well, it affected his work and he didn't want to go to school. Normally, like now, well he loves going to school. But when I go away his attitude changes at school, he becomes aggressive. He's very big for his age and when he becomes aggressive, that causes problems. And, also, his attitude towards the teachers changed, but as soon as I come back he's okay." (P5)

Another parent had been into a parents' evening and was surprised when his son's teacher could tell him exactly when he had gone away from home and exactly when he had returned. (P5) This had been apparent in the child's behaviour in school. The CEAS representative confirmed that this was apparent in all service schools, with some service schools being negatively affected when their establishments were inspected during the Iraq war. (O4)

For children who had missed work, the onus at both schools was on the students and their families to catch up. (O4, A3) The schools provided an after school clinic for students to work with teachers to catch up on missed work when they transferred to the school but the schools did not have the resources to run this during the school day. As a result, students often opted not to go to clinic and catch up on their work. Other teachers described having to remind parents about a child's missed work but having no support from home to help the child. (E5) Whilst Upton School tested all children entering the school, they did not test reading levels of every child. These were tested throughout the school in September only, so if a child arrived later on, they would have to wait until the following cycle for testing. This was due to the time constraints involved in testing. It would have necessitated a specialist teacher to carry out the work which, given the number of new students, would have taken a large amount of time. At Alchester, new students were tested for their reading and spelling age, as well as being tested for their mathematical understanding. On an agreed day after this, students were allowed to start school. (Fn 5/4/05) Alchester attempted to contact new students' previous schools to find out about previous grades. This was not always successful, as a look at school assessment data revealed some gaps. (Fn 4/4/05) The school could have spoken to individual students, however, and ascertain their grades from them, but did not do this. (Fn 7/4/05) The Chair of

the National Association of State Schools for Service Children had commented that a positive way forward for service schools would be to create a Student Services Manager for these schools who would liase with previous schools, test students and work with them to complete the necessary work to be integrated into their new classes. (E13) This would obviously require, however, extra funding which had been put in place at Alchester (via the Children's Fund, A1).

Special educational needs

As described earlier, the incidence of SEN in Southshire was higher amongst service children than the civilian population (Hansard, 2004, Col 87). As a general pattern, this was confirmed by both the AFF Education Expert (who cited research conducted in Northern Ireland that had discovered similar patterns [O6]) and the SSAFA representative (O1). And yet, in Southshire, service schools did not receive any additional specialist support. Visits from the Educational Psychology Service were organised according to school size, so smaller schools were visited less. Upton School was a small school by secondary school standards but the high service population would not have merited extra support time – one of the administration staff talked openly about being horrified that they had an Ed Psych visit only three times a year. (Fn 22/1) Furthermore, Upton School senior managers had commented on the difficulty of obtaining extra support when students were often only at school for two years. One case had been particularly apparent to staff:

> "Another doctor said to me recently, this child needs to be referred for some psychological counselling and I agree, I'll put him on the list. But he won't be a priority, he'll be about 15 on that list and they'll get to him in about three years' time. Literally, three years' time. Ah, he says, he'll have left school by then. It happens all the time." (E1)

It would appear, therefore, that not only was Upton School not getting the amount of specialist visits it required but children with SEN would have to wait a long time to see a specialist, which might result in their having moved on before this happened. A further difficulty here was that prioritising service children for assessment and support would mean that civilian children would have to wait.

At Alchester, staff mentioned that the statements of children new to the school were either incomplete or the children had no statement at all. As a result, the school tried to organise all annual reviews within six months of the child's arrival

at the school. (Fn 4/04/05, Fn 5/04/05) Whilst the feeling at the school was that the school never had enough support from the Educational Psychology service, the local Ed Psych service did organise its visits according to the number of SEN cases at the school (rather than according to the size of the school, as was the case at Upton) which indicated that the school should not have had to wait too long to access specialist support for new students. The SEN figures, however, were only updated every three years so were not reflective of the actual (ever changing) situation at Alchester School.

The SSAFA representative and AFF Education Expert were in agreement that there was something of a national problem - spending money on specialist support for service children was a bizarre concept for schools:

> "a school whilst recognising a child may have special needs won't or can't divert resources to that child because quite simply they're not going to be there long enough to impact on their targets and exam results." (Hutchinson, 2004)

At Upton, the hope was to establish a multi-agency centre off the site of the school that would have a permanent representation by several external agencies supporting service and civilian children (for example, Educational Psychologists, Educational Welfare Officers, Army welfare). The School had already put together a proposal which they hoped that the LA might be able to fund. And yet, multi-agency meetings at the school had shown a lack of interest by the other agencies (Fn 22/1) with no representation by social services, the army welfare service or the police.

A further consideration was the different level of support given to children in SCE schools. Mrs Turner's comments that children in SCE had different levels of SEN support (Fn 18/9) turned out to be true. The interview with the CEAS Officer (O4) revealed that:

> "a lot of them [SCE schools] say that their Statements are not Statements in that sense, that they are written in the same style, have the same quality of advice and, as far as I know, where LEAs are concerned, they carry the same level of importance. I mean they are not required to recognise them by law but most do and it's good practice to recognise them. The problem is the differences in provision which is available. Over there there's not the same range of facilities and provision that there is here, there aren't the range of support services so there are differences."

Specialist support in SCE Germany was focused on primary age children, with specialist units being attached to primary schools only (MOD, 2000c). As a result, service parents who had put their children through primary school in Germany often expected that their child would receive the same level of support in the UK. (Also corroborated in Hansard, 2004, Col 80 and by staff at Alchester [Fn 4/04/05]) These misconceptions could create difficulties between teachers and parents. Furthermore, the increasing number of Foreign and Commonwealth soldiers (Fn 16/6) had placed a new demand on LAs. Schools were being faced with increasing their provision of English as a Foreign Language tuition and specialist support. In Southshire, one primary school near to a garrison with a significant presence of Gurkha soldiers had had to employ a Nepalese-speaking teacher in order to deal with specific problems at the school. (Hansard, 2004, Col 88) This was funded by the LA without any extra support from central government.

The issue of recognising service children's special educational needs was assessed by the AFF SEN specialist as being very important to the army. In her speech to the AFF Conference (Fn 16/6), Sharon Mansur commented that a failure to recognise need would lead to a very real cost to army. Service children would not make progress, service families would break up and some soldiers would be forced to weekly commute so that families would have stability. Furthermore an inappropriate assessment and understanding of service children with SEN might lead to expensive and un-necessary alterations to housing quarters. Sharon Mansur was concerned that army families were not registering children on the SEN register held by the SCE and CEAS for fear of jeopardising chances of promotion for the serving soldier.

Upton School's Counsellor was also concerned at the impact of parental absence on children later into their lives and whether early parental detachment would create problems later on:

> "they [army children] will have relationship difficulties, they may have anger or depression problems. The other thing which is quite important is the relationship between alcohol and substance abuse and violence." (E10)

Conflict

The theme of conflict came out of this research particularly clearly, with people failing to understand the point of view of other people and unable to see the different worlds that other people might inhabit. At Upton School the army was viewed as both an opportunity and a threat (Fn 13/11) and this dichotomy seems to be indicative of the overall feeling at the school. There was no army presence at the school – for example, there were no army posters around the school, no use of army facilities by the school's sports teams and no mentoring of older pupils by soldiers based at Upton Garrison. Lots of opportunities seemed to be wasted. And yet, the feeling coming across from the teaching staff, time and again, was that the army should get more involved in the education of its dependent children seen in E1, E2, E3, E4, E8, as well as corroborating evidence of a similar situation nationally in E13. The school's governing body did not have a member from the local army camp. From their experience with military governors they considered that, "they [the army representative] aren't there voluntarily. Therefore, they may attend the minimum number of meetings they can, but their heart and soul is not in it" (E9).

The army parents did not seem to respect the school trying to use army connections to get support for children. Following a meeting with Upton School's Key Stage Four Co-ordinator, one father was angry when it was suggested that he seek help from the "military network" (P5). It was almost as if using military connections was seen as a way of the school moving problems on to somebody else, rather than being a genuine way of getting help for a child. This links very well to the Senior Teacher's concerns that support services did not take into account the little time that children often spent in Upton, resulting in children moving on before they had been assessed. Furthermore, using military connections might have worried army parents, not wanting to reveal family difficulties to their military superiors. A clear concern had been expressed by the parents and other people involved in the research was the perception that criticising the army for its welfare policy and its related attitude towards the education of army children might result in some form of retribution from the soldier's chain of command. Mrs Turner wondered whether 'going public' on her concerns about the state of education in some of the primary schools in Germany would have made some progress for her. She commented, "it's the system. After all these years, I kept my mouth shut and I got on with it" (P1). Mrs Turner's

concerns were not, perhaps, altogether extreme. The AFF Education Specialist was clear that:

> "the army is not really permissive when it comes to expressing an opinion, you're not really allowed to shout and scream and people really should make their voices heard more. And I think the army is responsible for a lot of that because a lot of people worry if they make a fuss then that could count against them for their next promotion" (O6).

There was the feeling amongst army circles that "this is what we've got, this is what we're stuck with," (P5) also resulting in army families feeling unwilling to challenge the system. This was also confirmed by the AFF Education Specialist who said, "we've got this great thing with forces families of making the most of what we've got" (O6). As a result, army families might not feel able to challenge difficulties.

Also apparent was stereotyping of army children – how they should behave in the eyes of the teaching staff. One teacher at Upton thought that school, for the army child, was:

> "a stepping stone before they can get to the army. It's like at other schools they want to learn, they come in and they've got ambitions, here I don't think they have" (E7).

A similar view was expressed by a teacher at Alchester. An interview with another member of staff, however, revealed that, in the year 11 cohort that year, only two boys were applying to join the army and, of these, only one came from an army background. Other teachers had been told that the school was "tough" since there were a number of army children attending it. (Fn 7/1) This also mirrored the comment from another member of staff who was "surprised" that teaching French at Upton School was so easy (E6). He put this down to the fact that the army children had lived abroad and might be more receptive to learning about other cultures. Members of staff agreed that, in their view, army children were quick to adapt to life at new schools and settled in easily, "they are almost like chameleons, they change their colours to suit the environment" (E4). It was evident that they considered army *children* to be like this and did not seem to break down this myth and consider individual cases.

Rivalry between army children was evident in the headteacher of Upton's comment, "we often have fights between children from different garrisons and we're surrounded here," (E2) as well as in the words of the Chair of the NASSSC. He revealed that there was a culture of 'macho' in his service school that he was trying hard to break down, by rewarding good behaviour (E13). Similarly, Upton's school counsellor said there was:

> "more readiness to use force and aggression, getting your way by giving orders, rather than using negotiation or listening. A lot of the younger boys when they see a column of tanks drive past, for example, will stand still and wave and talk about how they want to join the services and have guns and shoot people. And there's this very, very strong role model of aggression, not just for the boys but for the girls as well" (E10).

One of the army parents was very dismissive of this sentiment, "they think well, their parents, being military, you know, bed checks in the morning, inspections every Saturday, that sort of thing" (P5).

The presence of a senior member of Upton Garrison was not felt at Upton School. In spite of letters of invitation being sent to the Garrison Commander's office, nobody came to attend the multi-agency meetings being held at the school (Fn 22/1). The School's Chair of Governors admitted that previously the school had not been doing well and had got defensive about the state that it was in (Fn 23/2). At a difficult time for the school, the army had not been proactive in its support. A Welfare Officer of a regiment based in Upton felt that he was under 'some pressure' both from 'above' him in his regiment and from his own 'social conscience' (O3) to get involved with Upton School. However, even if he were to volunteer to get involved on the governing body of the school, for example, other welfare experts considered that the two year posting cycle of the army meant that "people dealing with welfare policies only have a short while to achieve results, so they plump for short-term answers to difficulties" (O1). Since short-term answers might not be called for (long-term solutions might be better) this might not be an effective nor efficient form of intervention by the army. And yet, the army appeared to 'guide' army parents. The letter from the Army Welfare Service (Fn 13/5) outlining troop movements to the area indicated that only Upton School and its feeder primary schools were being considered as potential schools for in-coming personnel. With other primary and secondary schools in the area, this

effectively limited the choice for new parents if they were prepared to act on the advice from the army alone, rather than investigating other provision available.

Contrastingly, at Alchester School, the lack of involvement of the army in the daily life of the school was accepted, rather than being seen as overly problematic, with the deputy headteacher commenting:

> "they [the army] rarely attend meetings and recently there has been a very poor record. I'm not saying it's disinterest, you know the guy's on active service, things like that, it's nobody's fault" (A2).

Alchester School placed an advertisement in the military handbook for Alchester Garrison (Method Publishing, 2005), as well as the military magazine which was distributed amongst military households on a bi-monthly basis (Fn 4/4/05 and 6/4/05). Contrastingly, Upton School advertised itself in the Upton Garrison handbook only (Method Publishing, 2002) and did not make use of the garrison monthly magazine. Essentially, Alchester School appeared to make use of all possible routes into the military community, whilst accepting the limitations of this, whilst Upton School continued to feel threatened by the military community nearby. During the course of the research, Upton School did, however, invite the local army welfare service (AWS) to one of its multi-agency meetings, although the AWS did not attend (Fn 22/1).

Amongst the parents of Upton Garrison, similar mixed messages were apparent. The 'grapevine' of the army families could be a formidable force. One parent (Fn 25/9) commented that she had heard that Zennor Primary School had been telling army parents with children in year six not to send their children to Upton School since 'they didn't like army children'. Similarly, another parent (Fn 25/11) commented at a school meeting that, "I'm in the army and the first thing that happens is that we're told don't send them [your children] there." When it came to dealing with schools, parents held back on telling teachers about their children, fearing that they might be labelled as pushy, "if you go in there and say, look my child is really bright, they say, oh look at him, blowing his own trumpet" (P5). Furthermore, it was reported nationally that some service parents did not want to admit to schools that they were from a service background – either because to do so might jeopardise the family's security (Hansard, 2004, Col 79)) or out of fear at

discrimination when applying to a school (O6). One parent also commented that she didn't "think an army child is treated as well as a civilian child" (P3).

The perceptions the army parents held about Upton School were clearly incorrect. One father commented that 70% of the children at the school were from an army background (P5) whereas the real figure was closer to 30% of the school population. Another father was adamant that the Ministry of Defence partly funded the school because of the number of service children that attended it. (Fn 24/3) The involvement of the army in the education of army children was an issue that confused the army parents asked. Initially, the parents seemed to affirm their rights to educate their children independently of the army and without their involvement:

> "my kids being in a civilian school is my problem. I mean, if I have an issue with the school, I can't understand why people think the welfare office or padre is going to sort it out for them" (P5).

Parents agreed that, if they had a problem with their child's schooling, they would approach the school. When they were asked to whom they would go to, all the army parents replied that they would approach the school, with some incredulity that they had been asked the question in the first place. And yet, this viewpoint was often contradicted by what the parents said. The schools in Germany were seen to be successful because they involved the army and were part of the military structure, "this [Upton School] is not a military school, we're not in Germany here, we have no voice" (P5). Another father commented, "another thing about the service schools in Germany is that ... the military are aware that they have got in-roads into that school." On the one hand, the parents didn't seem to want the army to be involved in their child's education, but on the other they felt that the involvement could be a good thing. Parents made assumptions about the provision of education in schools in the UK based on their experiences of schools in Germany. Parents spoken to as part of this research spoke of their disappointment at schools in the UK not having access to the army's sports facilities (P5). They also assumed that all of the schools in Germany followed the same curriculum patterns, which was not the case. Finally, the CEAS Officer interviewed was worried that parents would come back from Germany and would assume that their children would have similar levels of support in UK classrooms to the support they received in SCE schools (O4).

The army locally from policy coming down nationally had made some moves towards easing some of the difficulties that service children encountered. Some policies were being put into place, including allowing service families to retain a quarter if their child was at a 'critical' stage in their education (a critical point of a child's education, according to the guidelines, are the final term before public examinations only and if the child is having an SEN assessment carried out at the time of posting) and trying to allow service families to move during the school holidays rather than during term-time (Hansard, 2004, Col 99). However, this involvement does not match the perception of the army's involvement by the service parents. A further difference between perception and practice involved the assessment and support of children with SEN in SCE. Children with SEN in Germany were assessed according to SEN guidelines but the SCE was "not required to recognise them [SEN assessments] by law," (O4) since the assessment took place outside the UK. As a result, children returning to the UK might not have their needs recognised by UK LAs. Mrs Turner also confirmed that the SEN assessment that had taken place for her son was not recognised back in the UK (P1). Further national policy involved the School Liaison Policy that firmed up arrangements between local army commanders and schools in areas with a significant army presence. In the cases of Upton and Alchester, however, the paucity of communication between the garrisons and the schools suggested that this policy was not effectual. Furthermore, the AFF Education Expert had considered that the "inaugural review of local liaison showed there is still a way to go with local liaison" (Hutchinson, 2004).

Boarding School Education

A conversation with Upton School's deputy headteacher revealed that the school had become interested in the link between educational achievement and the rank of serving soldiers and officers (Fn 25/9). The school had looked at the findings of the 1991 Neighbourhood Census and had realised that Upton's two quarter areas had returned very different sets of results. The area of Upton lived in by predominantly soldiers and non-commissioned officers had 4% of its population having a Further Education qualification, whilst the area of Upton lived in by officers had a 10% figure. This suggested to the school that the officers had a higher level of education. The school's headteacher (E2) had looked at the background of the army parents who sent children to Upton School and asserted that, "most of the children come from the families of soldiers, not officers, we have

one sergeant, one warrant officer." As a result, it could be said that the level of education of the army parents with children at Upton School was low.

The Boarding School Allowance, paid to serving members of the army in order to pay (part of) the school fees at boarding schools in the UK, was seen to be problematic. Soldiers are signed on to the army for a period of 22 years and are not guaranteed an automatic renewal after this time. Therefore, it was considered that:

> "if you retire at 40 from the army and have done your 22 years, you will have had to have had children by 22 to benefit from the system. And you don't want children to be going in and out of the different systems. It would be very difficult for a child to go from a boarding school education into the state system, although there are some fabulous state schools out there." (O6)

Officers are employed under different terms and conditions to soldiers, serving until they are 55 years of age. For officers, therefore, boarding school allowance can be guaranteed until a later age and until children are more likely to have been through secondary school. As a result, it was seen that, although a representative of every serving rank in the armed forces had an applicant for the BSA (excluding the rank of Second Lieutenant) the number of BSA applicants coming from officer ranks was more numerous than those from soldiers. Another reason for this could also be seen in the assertion by soldiers that, if they had not attended boarding schools themselves, they would be far less likely to send their children into a system which they did not know, "the other thing is a family thing, it depends what kind of family background you come from. My wife is dead against it." (P5)

The BSA was also problematic in terms of the level of funding it provided army parents. The BSA levels were considered too low to cover tuition fees and the 'extras' (for example, equipment and uniform) of a boarding school education, "the FCO families have a realistic allowance of over £6000 per term per child and the forces' allowance of £4000 is nearly laughable now." (O6) As a result, families are required to 'top up' the fees with their own money – one army father estimated that he was paying an extra £420 per term for his son and when he became thirteen years of age, this would rise to just below £1000 per term. He then commented that he "couldn't have done it up until a couple of years ago when [he] had gone through the promotions and stuff." (P5) One service expert (O1) added that a further issue was that if you sent one child to boarding school with

the BSA you felt morally obliged to send your other children and this could prove very costly.

In Germany, the SCE provides boarding school accommodation for secondary aged children whose school is too far away from their home base to warrant a daily trip between home and school. As a result, living in Germany will not always be a guarantee for army parents that their children can live with them. For some parents, the lack of choice is problematic. One girl at Upton School (Fn 24/3) was having to move in with her aunt who lived in the Midlands because, when her parents were posted to Germany later that year, she would have to attend weekly boarding school. Neither she nor her parents wanted that, nor did they consider the BSA. Another army father had commented,

> "we were getting to the stage where my daughter was going to have to leave *Orfield* School and go to *Gonster*, weekly boarding, and she just said, no, I'm not doing that. It scared her to death, the fact that she was going to go to school on a Monday and not come home again until the weekend. No choice, no option." (P5)

For some parents it could have been that their decision not to consider a boarding school education for their children was related to their need to keep their children with them. Three of the focus parents (P2, P3 and P4) had expressed very strongly their desire to keep their children at home and had mentioned that they didn't "have kids to send them away." (P4)

A further consideration for all parents was how appropriate a boarding school education would be for their child. One service expert was concerned that the BSA was handed out to parents without an examination of its impact on individual children. (O1) The AFF Education Specialist had also commented that:

> "it would be irresponsible if we were to tell parents of the option to board their children without talking about the possible emotional impact on the child and family, the alteration to family dynamics and of course the expense." (Hutchinson, 2004)

One army child who had been sent to boarding school and had been affected by his experiences (and had returned to the local state school) had commented, "when I went to boarding school it got quite stressful because I didn't get to see any of my friends or my family for ages." (E14) His use of language (describing

the experience as "stressful") might indicate how much he had been affected, whilst his reasons for wanting to return to Upton (because of his family and friends) might indicate his need for secure relationships and a sense of belonging.

Finally, sources were clearly concerned that the BSA was viewed by the MOD as the only alternative option to the difficulties of mobility. (O1) It was also commented that "boarding may be an option that parents find increasingly hard to fund but for many it is seen as the only way to counteract the effects of school admissions and turbulence." (Hutchinson, 2004) With money continuing to be put into funding the BSA, alternative solutions to education problems might not be researched or funded.

Funding issues

The impact of mobility can be keenly felt by schools in their funding arrangements. Student numbers can go up or down due to individual and regimental postings. If numbers go up, schools may need to appoint extra staff to cover extra classes. They will also have to allocate books and equipment to new students. If numbers go down, schools may find that they have too many staff and have ordered in too many books for their original projected number on roll. A further consideration is what is described as 'ghost pupils' whereby students arrive and leave the same school within one year, thus triggering no additional funding.

Funding for education in England is controlled by each Local Authority and different LAs may choose to respond to the funding of individual schools in different ways. In Upton, Southshire LA give each school a share of the school budget based on the number of pupils on roll at that school on pupil census day (Pupil Level Annual Schools Census on the 16th January of each year). If pupil numbers were to rise by over 5% then Southshire would respond by putting additional funds into the school. As Upton's Finance Officer commented, however:

> "even though we have a high turnover and our numbers go up and down, we have never triggered extra funding in all the years that I have been here." (E9)

This would be because an influx of new students into the school is usually preceded by students leaving the school, due to the cyclical nature of regimental moves. If pupil numbers significantly decreased, the school would be required to

'pay back' some of their initial budget to the LA. A parliamentary debate (Hansard, 2004, Col 90) mentioned one primary school, in a neighbouring LA to Southshire, faced a 'claw back' of over £300,000 because the number predicted to arrive by the army did not actually materialise following changes in Arms Plot movements.

Southshire LA was acutely aware of the difficulties that service schools went through. As a result, the LA paid what it called the 'service school factor' (in 2003-4 this involved £544,000 of extra payment was divided between 24 schools in the LA) to any school with a significant army population. This figure used to be calculated on a fixed scale, so that, for example, schools having between zero and twenty army pupils would be able to gain so many pounds of extra funding, whilst schools with between twenty-one and forty army pupils incurred additional sums. This was felt to be unfair as schools with only one pupil less than the next 'trigger' point were unable to claim any additional funding. Now, Southshire operates a sliding scale, so that all army pupils can be taken into account. One concern, however, was in the divisiveness of extra funding for forces schools by an LA. A parliamentary debate (Hansard, 2004) commented on this very fact, with one MP saying that "[additional funding for 'forces' schools] will always create tension with non-forces schools." (Ibid, Col 82) Southshire LA had not always recognised army children as being a clearly defined group, as the very recent change in comparators formula had indicated. When interviewed, the LA's Inclusion Manager stated that, "one of the issues is that we have no group effort looking into this [army children issues]. I am not aware of discussing this with other advisors and there are no policies for dealing with this." (E11) However, when talking to other LA personnel (E12), it became clear that there was some work taking place at local and national level, but that this was clearly not always being disseminated to all schools (E2) or other figures in the LA.

Alchester School did not receive any additional funds for the number of service children in the school, although the deputy headteacher (A2) admitted that there used to be extra funding available. The LA's EP service, however, recognised that Alchester School had a high number of students with special educational needs and organised its visits according to the number of students on the Code of Practice. (Fn 6/4/05) This resulted in frequent visits to the school, although the EP service only updated student numbers every three years. As a result, EP

visits might not always be representative of the number of students at Alchester School requiring EP time. However, in order to overcome the difficulties that new students might have on arrival, the school endeavoured to organise SEN reviews within six months of a student's arrival at the school. (Fn 4/4/05)

Members of Parliament (Hansard, 2004) called for additional funding to be made available from central government to these LAs so that local budgets would not have to support the problems caused by troop movements and mobility. David Milliband (the then Schools Minister) responded that the DfES Education Funding Standards Group "could not reach a consensus about the efficacy or need for a mobility factor in the funding formula for distribution to LEAs," (Hansard, 2004, Col 100) and as a result, LAs would not receive any additional funding from central government. David Milliband assured LAs, however, that they should feel free to adopt local mobility payments and give schools additional funding from their own budgets if they saw fit.

Upton's headteacher commented that:

> "it might look like it's all green fields around here and, oh, they can't possibly understand what it's like in the city, but I know, I've taught in the inner city but I know that this school .. [has] just as many problems, if not more in some circumstances and we are seriously under-resourced." (E2)

One of the difficulties that the school had experienced was the perception by outsiders that, because the school was in a rural area, it had no difficulties. The results that the school was getting should therefore be compared with other schools in rural areas. The mobility factor, however, did cause the schools difficulties and, as a result, it was able to negotiate with visiting Ofsted inspectors that the school should be considered according to different comparator indicators. Previously, Ofsted used free school meals as a poverty indicator and, therefore, a means of comparing schools in difficult areas with other similar schools. They went on to recognise a 2 to 1 ratio for service schools (with two service children being equal to one child claiming a free school meal) so that need indicators could reflect the unique difficulties that mobility and service life caused to schools.

Admissions

The issue of admissions was generally agreed by education specialists to be the biggest problem for army families. (O4) Difficulties when trying to get places for children were experienced by army parents in Upton (with two of the four focus children having to wait for places to come up at the primary school of their choice in Upton) as well as nationally. Some schools in areas where there was an increased number of service families used to hold open places for service children, but it had been noted that the government had told schools not to do this. (Hansard, 2004, Col 91) As a result of these difficulties, the SFTF was able to liase with the DfES and negotiate amendments to the Code of Practice on School Admissions (2002) which enabled service families to apply to schools as soon as they had proof of their new posting. The posting order was to be seen as proof of the move to the new area and an exact address was not necessary. However, it had been noted by the education specialist at the AFF that, "some admissions authorities see no reason why they should allocate places ahead of a family arriving in the area." (Hutchinson, 2004) Admissions policies were still seen by many army parents as failing to take into account their mobile lifestyles.

For many parents, applying to schools in advance became the key to securing a place at a school for their child. (P1, P2, P3, P4) However, being prepared became difficult for parents when they were posted at the last minute or when the DHE (the Defence Agency who oversee the allocation of quarters) failed to allocate quarters in sufficient time. An interview with the AFF Education Representative (O6) suggested that a parent's lack of local knowledge was also a key issue for army parents. They would not know what other schools were available and would be more likely to listen to what somebody else in their quarter area said to them. (Issues raised at the AFF Bi-Annual Conference, 2004, included those from families whose local DHE did not recognise the new regulations about allocation times for quarters, thus slowing down the admissions process for army parents getting their children into local schools, Fn 16/6). The CEAS in the UK had successfully managed to write a booklet which went out to anyone changing posting, in which it set out for army parents the time-frames they should think about when trying to get their children into schools. The CEAS Education Officer commented that:

> "not thinking about schooling, for some people who don't value education it's the last thing they think of. I also think there's the view that it's still as easy to get children into school as it used to be. Quite genuinely, some parents don't realise, well, if you haven't moved for a while, it's unlikely that they realise the impact of the admissions legislation on moving schools." (O4)

The inclusion of this booklet with all posting orders represented a definite step forward for the army, in that they began to get more involved with the welfare of army dependents. However, supplying the booklet to the serving soldier depended on that soldier passing the booklet on to their partner, as it might be their partner who made the contact with schools (as it was in the case of all four participants of this study).

The Education specialist at the AFF was also concerned that the increase in Specialist Schools would also create difficulties for army families, since schools would be able to select their intake early on in the school career of pupils:

> "the specialist schools, which will take so many children with an aptitude, well, that's fine if you happen to be there when the levels of aptitude are decided, but if you're not and the school is full, what then?" (O6)

An increase in specialist schools (which is predicted by this government) could present fewer schools for army parents who are prepared to accept students at other than 'normal' registration times.

Both Upton and Alchester schools had admissions processes that were understood (if not written down, or "procedures rather than policies" as one member of staff commented, E1) by all staff. At Alchester, new students were interviewed by the Deputy Headteacher, along with their parents and were given a tour of the school. This could take anything up to one hour. Following this, students were tested for their reading and spelling age, as well as being tested for their mathematical understanding. On an agreed day after the initial interview, students were allowed to start school. (Fn 5/4/05) Alchester's admissions form provided room for parents to note information about a student's three previous schools (which, importantly, would allow the school to understand the extent to which the student had been mobile during their school career), as well asking for information regarding a parent's deployment on active service with the army. In the time that elapsed between interview and school start date, Alchester

attempted to contact new students' previous schools to find out about previous grades. This was not always successful, as a cursory look at school assessment data revealed some gaps. (Fn 4/4/05) The school could have spoken to individual students, however, and ascertain their grades from them, but did not do this. (Fn 7/4/05)

The admission' process at Upton was corroborated by several members of staff. (E1, E3, E4 and E6) New students were interviewed by an administrative assistant and were tested for Maths and English. (Fn 12/12) As the school was small, it was not possible for students to be interviewed by teaching staff, who did not have the 'room' in their timetables for new student visits. The school's admissions form gave the parents room for noting the school attended immediately prior to coming to Upton. In both schools, students were paired up with a 'buddy' in their year group, although there were no 'formal' checks on the student's induction after that point. At Upton, one new entrant admitted that he had found starting late in the school year difficult because, "you get told off for doing things wrong, but you don't get told what's wrong in the first place." (Fn 13/11) Upton staff admitted that the induction process was, "something ... we could improve on, we don't do it as well as we could or should." (E3) At Key Stage Four, students transferring in to years 10 or 11 were interviewed by the Key Stage Four Co-ordinator, so that he could assess what options they had taken previously and try and meet these options at Upton. He then advised students to return home for a couple of days so that he could contact their previous school and find out some more about them, although he did comment that students couldn't "get a fresh start if you say 'oh I was talking to your headteacher last week and she said' or whatever." (E4) In both Key Stages, however, there was agreement that new students would be paired off with a well-established student 'buddy' so that they would have someone to show them around for the first few weeks. Key Stage Co-ordinators then made informal checks on new students after that point. The decision as to which set a new pupil would go into was taken by the Key Stage Co-ordinator based on information from the pupil's file and tests, rather than in consultation with teachers at the school. It was agreed by the senior management team at the school that the current admissions policy was not sufficiently formalised. As a result, it was felt that, "you would keep half an eye on them [the new students] to make sure that friendships were established, and this 'eye on' was the policy," (E1) rather than having a written policy itself. The new

policy, on mid-term transfers, was due to be discussed at staff meetings and the results would be worked into the information booklet that went out to parents). At neither school was there evidence of a student booklet, giving information on the school from a student's point of view.

Files

At Upton School the pupil files were not actually kept in one place. When the researcher was trying to view the files of the pupils involved in the research, she realised that getting access to the files was more difficult than she had originally anticipated. The files should have been stored in the Key Stage Three Co-ordinator's office, but since Mrs B had experienced several changes of office throughout her time at the school, the files were located all over the building. Essentially, this meant that getting information was difficult and that, if a child was going to move schools at short notice, it would be very likely that the school would not be able to gather the existing information on that child to send the files away with the child and their parents. (Fn 8/12, 9/3) As it was, the researcher was only able to actually view the files belonging to Del and Nick several months after she first saw the files belonging to the girls.

The files for the two girls (Fn date), Katie and Shelley, revealed that there was a lot of information missing. Neither of the girls had the Key Stage Two to Three Transfer Document on file, which was a legal requirement and should have formed part of their primary to secondary school information transfer. (It may have been that these were kept at another location, but this corroborates the concern that storing information on pupils in several locations was not in the pupils best interests). Shelley's file revealed that there was comprehensive information from her previous primary school (in Upton) but that the three schools she had attended prior to that had no information included. Upton School had included copies of Shelley's school reports as well as any incident reports that teachers had made. Katie's file was quite extensive, with information from her second primary school in Germany (as well as all of the SEN assessments that had been carried out over there). Although she had spent less than a year at her primary school in Upton, there was no information from that school. Like Shelley, Katie's file contained reports from Upton School, as well as evidence from her Annual Review for SEN.

The files belonging to the boys (Fn 24/3), Del and Nick, also showed that there was information missing. Del's file included his Key Stage Two Transfer Document, as well as a full entry profile to Zennor Primary School in Upton. His SEN information included assessment information from his first primary school, plus additional assessments made at Zennor. There was no information from Charterhouse Primary. Nick had similar information available, including an entry profile for Zennor Primary, as well as information from all of Nick's previous primary schools (four in total). Neither Nick nor Del had any information included from Upton (such as the reports that the girls had in their files). At Alchester School there was also evidence of students having incomplete (or even totally absent) sets of school records. Charles', (the boy observed as part of the visit to Alchester School) initial testing at the school suggested he was capable to maintaining a position within the top Maths set, whereas knowledge of the student picked up after a few months at the school revealed that he felt more confident in the second set and preferred to be at the top of his group in set two. (Fn 5/4/05)

Talking with staff at Upton School suggested that there was a mistrust of any information that a child brought to school when transferring. One teacher described the National Transfer Document as giving "a very bare bone picture of Key Stage Three," (E1) and as a result, it was usual for children to be tested when they came into both Upton and Alchester Schools, so that the staff could get a truer picture of their ability and aptitude:

> "when they [they] come to us they are given lots of tests anyway, so although we have their transfer documents, some of the information that arrives is often questioned, I have to say, so we tend to do our own testing and place them where we think it's appropriate." (E3)

The use of testing on entry to a school was also apparent in other schools, particularly within the SCE (O6). (One Member of Parliament called this repeated testing "relentless" and suggested that these only added to the woes of the service child, Hansard, 2004, Col 93). Not only did Upton and Alchester Schools test children on entry, but they also required parents to fill in a registration form, giving details of the previous school that the child had attended, as well as family details. If a child had attended more than one school before coming to Upton School, this would not be apparent from the information that parents were required to give on the registration form, although there was extra space provided on Alchester's entry form. For whole regiment moves, both schools often sent

teachers over to the garrison town that the regiment would be coming from, in order to meet prospective parents and pupils. (E2, A2) However, a look at one of the letters from the Army Welfare Service informing Upton School that they could expect new students (Fn 13/5) revealed that there were problems. The letter informed the school how many secondary age children there were but did not specify how many of these were already at boarding school which would create difficulties for school planning.

Both schools' policies was to give documents to children who were leaving the school, rather than forwarding them on to their future school. The reason for this became apparent when talking to the Key Stage Three Co-ordinator,

> "what used to happen was the child would say I'm leaving, the child would go off, we wouldn't necessarily know where they were going. They would leave all their documents, and it would be weeks sometimes months before we'd be asked for them, then we would have to post them, so there was the time factor and also the cost. So now we get it all ready, give it to the child and they take responsibility for it." (E3)

Upton School had a particularly clear policy of what to do when children informed them that they were going to leave:

> "first of all, [the school Administration Officer] would ask me to get the documents, so I would come down here and collect everything that we've got on the child, I would check with Learning Support if they are involved with them, the school receptionist takes around a leavers document to all the teachers and that has all their levels on. And the child that's leaving is expected to collect all their books." (E3)

The onus, therefore, was always on the parents (or child) to tell the school that they were moving and for the parents (or child) to hand over the files and books to the next school. Other teachers at the school confirmed that, in their experience, it was better for the children/parents to have the files and book since valuable time was wasted in waiting for a new school to contact them and then sending on information. (E4) It became clear, however, that children often came and went without warning from their parents, so the policy in place could be ignored. The issue of the transfer of files and information was considered to be of national importance and had also been highlighted by the Chair of the NASSSC (E13).

Isolation

A study of Upton revealed that the army estates where the married quarters were situated were quite isolated (see chapter five). Upton was obviously situated within the rural county of Southshire, away from any major centres of urbanisation. Within Upton, the married quarters were at disparate ends of the town, necessitating some considerable travel time between the two. Furthermore, a further married quarter area (Pilton) was situated entirely separate to Upton itself and required transport by car or public transport to travel to. Upton School was not situated within Upton itself, but at least three miles out of town. This necessitated some considerable travel time for students to get to and from Upton School. Students in Upton did not live far enough away from school to merit a county bus pass (available for students residing over three miles away from their school) so students were required to pay to travel by bus or walk to school. Students in Pilton lived far enough away from Upton School (and its feeder primary schools) to be given a bus pass. One commentator had said that, "the garrison is somewhat, well the school is somewhat isolated from the garrison, it [the school] doesn't belong anywhere" (O4) and was concerned that this resulted in Upton School being overlooked by parents and the local community. It was hoped that the decision to move Upton's summer festival from a site in the town to the school's playing fields would start to bridge this gap between school and community. (Fn 23/3) Certainly, Upton School's situation resulted in students having to travel some distance to get there.

And yet the situation of Upton School was by no means unique when compared to other schools that students had attended. Nick had mentioned that one of his primary schools was at least twenty minutes by bus from his quarter and that the nearest town was nearly one hour way. (N1) Katie's mum had been concerned that Katie's primary school in Germany was over 40 minutes drive from home (P1) whilst an early years expert from the garrison twenty miles away from Upton had mentioned that the primary school in the garrison was fairly central but that families had to walk for long distances to get there. (O2) Whilst Alchester School and garrison were situated on the edge of a large town, Alchester School was still situated at some considerable distance from the married quarters area resulting in a considerable walk to and from school for army children (Fn 4/04/05).

It became apparent that many army families had to either rely on public transport (which was non-existent in some of the areas that they lived in) or had to make arrangements with friends and neighbours. Many wives could not drive (Ob 22/1) or did not have access to the family car during the week as their husbands took the car to get to work (N2). Katie's mum was unable to drive (Fn 26/11) so did not attend many of the events at Upton School. Attendance at the school's parents' evening (Fn 25/11) was poor. A further difficulty was apparent when students were required to buy specialist food for a food technology lesson. The small local shop did not stock the ingredients and this would have necessitated a special trip to a supermarket to buy them (Ob 11/11).

The impact of the army families' isolation was by no means limited to transport difficulties. Katie's mum described her feeling of devastation when she realised where her quarter was situated in Pilton:

> "I was crying because I couldn't believe that we were here. I thought that we were in the middle of nowhere." (P1)

Katie confirmed that there was nobody from her father's regiment quartered nearby (K3) as a result the family would not have had anyone they could automatically rely on for support when they arrived in the area. Nick, on the other hand, recounted how his mum was able to rely on a neighbour for lifts when her husband had the car. Isolation, therefore, became something beyond geographical for Katie's family and began to relate to feelings of emotional need.

2 –RELATING THESE FINDINGS TO LITERATURE

The issue of school admissions was highlighted by the BBC (BBC, 2001) and the AFF (AFJ, 2001) both of which described the difficulties that service families can have getting a place at their school of choice, particularly given the short notice given for postings that can often occur in the army. As a result of this, the DfES' (2002) Code of Practice on Admissions stipulated that, whilst places at schools could not be held open for service families, schools should be aware of the difficulties that service life might create for admissions. Hutchinson (2004) who had obtained information from service families nationally suggested, however, that difficulties in school admissions still occurred. The fact that both Mrs Carter and Mrs Hobson had experienced these difficulties highlighted that problems still

occurred in Upton. At the school that Mrs Carter and Mrs Hobson were trying to gain places, 76% of the pupils came from an army background. This suggested that when service children make up such a large proportion of the whole school intake, a national code of practice (applicable to all schools) cannot be applied in the same way and is, perhaps, unrealistic in its expected outcomes.

At both Alchester and Upton there was evidence of children having missing or incomplete school files. In 1976 Spencer had highlighted the issue of incomplete school files for service children and had recommended that the SCE should take responsibility for standardising the files of service children. He urged the SCE to do this so that children moving between the UK and overseas postings (and within the UK) would have appropriate and in-depth information about their educational experiences to pass on immediately to their future schools. Nicholls and Gardner (1999) assessed the issue of continuity and progression in teaching and learning (which would be evident in the quick transfer of useful information about students) to be the major issue pertaining to mobility in schools. Both Galton (2000) and Ofsted (2002a) also considered that the quick transfer of information about students was the key to the good management of pupil mobility in schools.

A further issue evident in both schools was the teachers' perceptions of army children, considering them generally rather than specifically and attributing to them a set of behaviours and expectations that were not, perhaps, shared by all army children. An example of this could be seen in one teacher's perception that army children were "flexible and resilient" (E3) whilst at Alchester, a teacher considered army children to be "quick to settle in and gregarious" (A2). Mackay and Spicer (1975) had discovered that the perception amongst teachers about the true nature of the difficulties experienced by army children was not always correct. Alderson (1993) had found that teachers could be negative towards students transferring into their classes mid-year due to the extra work that this caused them.

In both schools, there was a clear sense of the army not being concerned about the education of army children locally. This translated to a sense of antipathy at Upton (seen in several of the interviews with teachers) and a world-weary acceptance of the status quo at Alchester. Both Keller and Decoteau (2000) and Williams and Mariglia (2002) highlighted the need for the army to maintain positive

relationships with teachers and local schools as a means of increasing the awareness of teachers to military specific issues. As a result, misconceptions (about the nature and difficulty of service life) might be able to be avoided. This theme was also picked up by Derrington and Kendall in their research on traveller children (2004) which suggested that schools misinterpreted the needs and experiences of traveller children, resulting in suspicion and mistrust on both sides. Dobson and Henthorne's research (1999) suggested that schools with a highly mobile population would have difficulties seeking parental involvement. In order to avoid the misconceptions described above, parental involvement would be crucial.

A reoccurring theme in all the teacher interviews was the sense that the mobility of army children created difficulties for the school curriculum. This theme could be broken down into army students' gaps in their knowledge (or having to repeat work) and the practical difficulties of matching a Key Stage Four student's option choices at a new school. In both schools teachers commented that they worried if students transferred in Key Stage Four. One mentioned he nearly had to "write students off" if they transferred (E4) whilst another commented that some students just couldn't "cope" with this. (A1) Spencer (1976) had called for a standardised curriculum so that students transferring between schools would not be faced with these issues. Galton (2000) mentioned that the need to work towards continuity of curriculum between schools was still very much an issue over twenty years after Spencer's initial research.

There was an apparent invisibility of the army within the school buildings (in the sense that there were no posters advertising army events or army careers on school noticeboards) and the army was not mentioned in classrooms by teachers (as a curricular tool). Both Williams and Mariglia (2002) and Hylmo (2002) both described the need for aspects of the unique army identity to be recognised in schools. Williams and Mariglia felt that an important part of the role of teachers of army children was to allow them space within the education setting to share their life experiences with their classmates (civilian and military) so that the civilian and military cultures could be explored and understood. Hylmo's study of children's literature revealed that there were few examples of writing about army children. As a result, a more mobile lifestyle was not seen as mainstream and would not be understood by more stable children. The impact of the invisibility of the army

culture within Upton and Alchester Schools might serve to make the culture less understood by civilian students and teachers. As a result, army students might feel less legitimate.

Chapter Seven - Analysis, Discussion and Theorisation

In this chapter, the five theories emerging from the research are presented and discussed. The data and theories emerging from this study are analysed in relation to major theoretical issues and debates. The chapter begins by focusing on the army children and then goes on to consider wider influences on their educational experiences.

1 – THE ARMY CHILDREN DEVELOPED INDIVIDUAL COPING STRATEGIES AND HAD UNIQUE PERCEPTIONS

What are Coping Strategies?

In chapter three, Faubion's description of culture (2001) was presented which highlighted the group aspect of culture. Turning now to individuals, Bourdieu's concept of capital (1997:46) is seen to be the way in which individuals have the means to exist in society. For Bourdieu, capital represents, "the principle underlying the immanent regularities of the social world." He suggests that individuals can be born into a situation in which there is little they can do anything about. This appears to negate, therefore, the concept of agency and self-determination, as outlined by Connell et al. (1982) which suggests that man should not be viewed as passively following the rules of his culture as he/she can choose to decide whether to follow that culture or not. Geertz, too, acknowledges that culture is an active construction and should not be viewed as something done to man, "man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he *himself* [researcher's own emphasis] has spun" (1975: 5). Bourdieu sets out a more individualised concept of culture in his discussion of '*sens du jeu*' (the feel for the game). This can be considered to be something "acquired through experience" (1989: 9). Bouveresse points out that this should be seen as a "creative aspect of practices" (1999: 53) and demonstrates that *sens du jeu* emerges from a person's experience. *Sens du* jeu, therefore, can be taken to represent a person's coping strategies or the way in which they respond to the world around them. In this section, we look at each child's *sens du jeu,* how they negotiate their way through their educational 'careers' and examine their 'agency'.

Pollard and Filer (1999a:11) identified coping strategies as being "the central concept ... to analyse the relationships between society and individuals, history

and biography." Drawing on the work of Vygotsky (1978) Pollard (1982; and with Filer, 1996) asserts that a child's understanding of the world is shaped by interactions with other human beings which he/she then acts upon. Pollard's "triadic" pattern of inter-relationship (1996) inter-weaves the various theories and concepts outlined above and provides a means of comparing and contrasting the coping strategies of the four students researched within this study. By examining each child's relationship with their parents, teachers and peers and, then, going on to examine the relationship between parents, teachers and peers, an understanding of each child's behaviour and individual coping strategies might emerge. As Pollard identified in 1982, teacher's coping strategies could only be understood within the context of their pupils' coping strategies. So, students can only be understood within the context of their teachers, families and friends.

Having outlined above where the concept of coping strategies have emerged from, the discussion now turns to comparing and contrasting each child's coping strategies. The section ends by bringing together the two categories of individual coping strategies – academic coping strategies and social coping strategies. We then look at some of the outcomes of the children's coping strategies and perceptions. Later in this chapter, the effects of mobility, the home culture and the clash of culture between the home and the school are explored. These can result in army children developing strategies that help them to negotiate the unique world in which they live. These strategies develop over time and can, perhaps, be seen as a result of the impact of multiple moves and changes of school.

Coping Strategies at School

First of all, the army child's experiences of school are considered. With regard to friendships at school, all four of the children had some difficulty establishing and maintaining friends, as evidenced in the work of Spencer (1976), Darnauer (1976), Jeffreys and Leitzel (2000) and Pollock and Van Reken (2001). It is suggested that these children develop a coping strategy of not getting too close to their peers. Del went from one friend to another (D1, D4), Shelley's relationship with Suzy started to come to an end (S4), Nick started to show signs of not understanding his great mate (Fn 13/5), whilst Katie's relationship with Alison was unequal and she demonstrated a need to latch on to others (Ob 30/1). A teacher at the school (E8) suggested that, if these children moved frequently, they did not learn the social skills they needed to maintain friendships. If they fell out with a

friend, they would be likely to move fairly soon so would not need to 'sort out' the argument with that friend. The two boys maintained friendships within the army structures, suggesting that they needed the level of understanding about their army lifestyles that army friends could bring them. Both of the girls maintained 'civilian' friendships. A girl at the pupil focus group suggested that 'civilian' friendships were better since 'civilian' friends did not have to move and, thus, were more supportive and sympathetic when the 'army' girls had to move (E14).

A further coping strategy connected to friendships concerned the way in which children learnt to let go of their friends when they knew that they were about to move on. Teachers reported seeing children in their classes working less and less with their previous work groups (A3), choosing to spend time alone and starting to distance themselves from their friends and their surroundings. On further questioning, it emerged that that child's parents had received their new posting orders and were starting to plan their next move. As a result, the child starts to distance him/herself from friends at school in order to make the pain of final separation more bearable. In doing so, however, these children miss out on the support that their friends could offer at this difficult time. Furthermore, the friends that they leave behind are often surprised and upset by their behaviour before the move and might make less of an effort to keep in touch with them afterwards. Some army children seemed to keep in touch with friends very rarely (Fn 5/4/05) and had difficulty remembering the names of friends from previous postings or moved on very quickly from them (D1). Again, this can be seen as a coping strategy – for the army children it must be very difficult to hear about the news from a previous school and hear how life continues to go on without them. It is far easier to pretend that there is no life going on at previous postings at all.

At school, all four of the students failed to describe the school, or any of their previous primary schools, as 'their' school. Mobility (see section two for more detail) created a sense of wishing to depersonalise learning experiences, perhaps numbing oneself from the pain of continually having to move on (Keson, 1991). Depersonalisation of learning relationships could also be seen in their failure to ask for help from teachers, choosing to copy work from friends instead. As a coping strategy, depersonalisation is quite clear. If army families move every few years, there is little sense in putting down roots and feeling part of a local community/school. Otherwise, moving on will become too painful. The

consequence of this, however, was that the children had varying degrees of impersonal relationships with their teachers. They learn, effectively, to remain 'rootless and restless' as suggested by Pollock and Van Reken (2001).

A further academic coping strategy might be the way in which the children failed to take responsibility for their own work. Teachers offered extra help that was not taken up and army students failed to attend homework clubs or coursework clinics (E5, E7). This might partly be connected to the sense that the children did not form strong relationships with their teachers. However, it might also be indicative of a deeper malaise. By failing to be responsible for their work the students are disconnected from the learning process and can, therefore, feel less emotion for it and will, perhaps, not feel responsible for their subsequent failure if all goes wrong. Engaging in the learning process would mean having to work closely with teachers to catch up and extra work and effort. Failure after all this emotional effort would be devastating but failing to get involved in the first place provides a means of switching off the emotions and not feeling anything at all.

Some of the children also learnt to develop diversionary tactics with the teachers – when they were asked for help, more often than not, they volunteered and spent a great deal of time handing out books or collecting in work. It was often seen that the army children tried very hard to 'drag out' this volunteer work by spending more time than necessary over it. As a result, they were seen to be 'good' and 'model' students by the teachers but also managed to avoid doing all the work that the teachers had set for the group. This resulted in the students not drawing attention to themselves but still being seen to maintain a good, although not close, relationship with the teacher. Price (2002) suggests that good behaviour is part of a military child's up-bringing since military parents are considered to be less likely to tolerate poor behaviour in their children.

The perceptions that the four focus children had of their lifestyle were quite different to that expressed by other people with an interest in their education. When the children were asked about what was difficult about moving schools, they responded that they found it hard to make friends and lose them again (N1, D1, S1, K1). All the adults questioned, however, discussed the difficulties that changing schools had on missing work. The social side of schooling was not a consideration that the adults mentioned. And yet, by not recognising or

addressing the social side of schooling, the adults involved with these children failed to see what was important to them – and if the social side of schooling was the most important thing for these children then this should have been acknowledged and addressed first, so that the children then felt able to settle down to their studies (Keller, 2001). This gulf in perceptions might suggest why the policies and strategies of those involved in the education of these army children never seemed to meet the needs of the children concerned.

Coping Strategies Beyond the School

Social coping strategies were also apparent within the four army children. The development of a strong bond with their mother can be seen as one important coping strategy. Del, Nick and Shelley all had strong relationships with their mothers. All three, in line with the findings of McCubbin and Dahl (1975) and Wertsch (1991) were eager to please their mothers and did not seek their disapproval. The children hinted at keeping information from their mothers in order to protect them. Katie was equally eager to please but this seemed to be out of a need to seek approval and attention, in an otherwise dysfunctional family setting, rather than actively seeking to protect her mother. The mobility caused by the army lifestyles had varying levels of impact within each home, as seen in sections two and four of this chapter. The children's feelings of concern for their mothers and feeling overly responsible are entirely understandable when it is understood that, for these army children, the mothers remained the only constant in their changing worlds (Jolly, 1987). For several of them, moving house took place at a time when their father was posted away, so the process was overseen entirely by their mothers. She represents everything that is familiar from before. Their fathers are a part of the changing world, more constant, perhaps, than the new friends and new school, but less present than their mothers. Investing all of their emotional energy in their mothers is not, therefore, entirely surprising.

The children had developed different coping strategies with regard to their relationships to the army, with a gender split being possible to be seen. The boys appeared to be more positive about the army and its role in their life. Del appeared to be overly positive about the army (D1) as a way, perhaps, of avoiding the pain of realising that the army way of life had created instability for his family. Nick, meanwhile, seemed to identify with the army (N1) but started to intimate that he was not happy with the army lifestyle (N4). He seemed to feel uneasy about

this, as if to admit he did not like the army would be seen as being disloyal to his family, kept quiet about this and did not admit it to his parents. In both boys there was a strong identity with 'the regiment' and both boys understood exactly what their fathers jobs entailed. With the two girls, however, there was a certain understanding of the work of their fathers but they did not seem to be interested by this (S1, K1). At first, this could seem to be because they were girls and did not identify with the masculine nature of the army. However, both girls reflected the attitude and roles of their mothers and, thus, supported the concept of the wife, remaining at home, and, thus, the private face of the army. Similarly, Jolly (1987:12) asserts that the army is "a way of life which is compatible with the older, traditional division of labour between the breadwinner husband and housewife." As a result, whilst the two girls did not appear to actively support the army, their behaviour suggested they were moulding themselves to 'fit' the expectation of them.

Looking beyond their life at school, the four army children did not perceive that there was anything out of the ordinary about their lifestyle. To them, moving every two years was normal (E14) and they did not complain about some of the hardships that they experienced as a result. They truly appeared to have a 'no blame' approach to their difficulties. As the children did not talk out of turn and did not complain about the difficulties that mobility caused them, their experiences were never truly understood by other people – for example, their teachers, parents and headteachers. Perhaps, however, to complain about the army lifestyle might have been too bold for the children? In later sections of this chapter, the issue of the all-consuming identity of the army and its impact on the whole family will be discussed. By complaining about the army, these children would be questioning their whole identity and that would be extremely difficult. In the case of Nick (N4), he started to complain about the army, stating that he didn't like it, and then tailed off. It was as if he couldn't allow himself to go any further and challenge his assumptions about himself and his family. Del (D2), when questioned, talked excessively about the positive side of the army. When these words were viewed juxtaposed to his comments about school and pastimes, they appeared to be overly positive. Again, it was as if he couldn't challenge his assumptions about his life. To do so would have been too painful.

The Implications of the Army Child's Coping Strategies

The outcomes of these coping strategies are clear. The social and academic coping strategies adopted by the army children in this study allow them to adapt to new schools, minimise the pain of leaving old schools and develop new friends. They maintain a low profile with their teachers so that they do not draw attention to the problems they might be having with their work. In short, they 'get by' at school rather than being overly successful there. However, by not expressing what their concerns are these children's perceptions of their life are very different to those of other people interested in them. As a result, policy and practices developed to 'help' these children may well not be what they need. One teacher (E4) commented that army children are like 'chameleons' in that they become whatever they need to be in order to fit into their new environment. It is likely that these children develop a 'persona' that might be totally different to the 'real' child underneath.

2 – TO WHAT EXTENT DOES MOBILITY, DIRECTLY AND INDIRECTLY, AFFECT THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF THE ARMY CHILDREN?

This section considers that mobility is likely to affect the educational experiences of the army child. The section outlines the effect of mobility on the four children in this study first of all and then goes on to consider army parents and teachers in schools. The outcome of the impact of mobility on army children and their schools is then discussed.

Why is Mobility an Important Consideration?

Mobility is a defining part of service life. Chandler (1989) commented that in 1984 fewer army personnel owned their own homes compared to naval and RAF personnel. As a result, army children moved house more frequently than any other service child. Every eighteen months to two years (at the least) army personnel move posting. Sometimes, army families are lucky in that the posting, whilst involving a different job for the serving member of the armed forces, will remain in the area in which the family live. The result of this can mean that the family can retain the quarter in which they live and the army child, as a result, can stay in the same school as before. Sometimes postings are only slightly further a-field and the serving soldier can negotiate with the Defence Housing Executive (DHE) to retain the quarter and commute daily to the new posting. However, due

to the recent policy of selling off quarters, the DHE are under increasing pressure to find service personnel housing in the area in which they work, so requests to retain quarters can often be turned down. Families will also be required to move house when the new posting is too far away from their initial quarter to consider commuting. However, as seen with Nick's parents (P3) sometimes families do consider living far apart and retaining a quarter in the first posting area if this is likely bring about some stability for the family. Whilst a weekly commute for a serving member of the armed forces is likely to bring greater family stability, Hogarth and Daniel (1988) conclude that, overall, weekly commuting can extract a great toll on family life. Their survey found that mothers became, effectively, single parents and that fathers resented not being able to see their children grow up.

Mobility and the Army Child

Considering the effect of mobility on army children first of all, we can see how the constant changing of schools has led some of the children in this study to withdraw from their teachers and peers. There is the sense that if a child experiences several changes of school they will fail to form lasting learning relationships with teachers – effectively, they will never get the chance to get to know their teachers properly and, in doing so, will not develop the sorts of social skills they need to learn at school. The results in the classroom were evident –the four children did not appear to ask for help when they were unsure nor did they make it known to teachers when they had finished a piece of work and ask for more (Spencer, 1976:432). It might be possible to conclude that, over time, teachers will begin to react to this difficult relationship. If a teacher experiences a level of indifference from their students, it would take a very skilled teacher not to mirror some of that indifference back to the class. At a basic level, as it was discussed in the House of Commons (Hansard, 2004) why invest so much emotional time in a student who will, most probably, move on again fairly shortly? The same could be said of schools' decisions not to divert resources to army students alone. As it is more than likely that these students will not be the students who eventually take external examinations at the school and, thus, have an impact on the school's league table results, why invest resources in this area? (O1) A vicious circle might develop, with students and teachers failing to engage with one another.

In the same way that children in schools can fail to develop relationships with teachers, the same can be said of their relationships with their peers (Darnauer, 1976; Keson, 1991; Jeffreys and Leitzel, 2000; Pollock and Van Reken, 2001; Price, 2002: Greenhalgh, 2004). Keller and Decoteau (2000) describe the negative response to turbulence by children as "downshifting," whereby the individual responds to a perceived threat or unpleasant experience. Teachers in Spencer's review (1976:444) were able to tell when their students' fathers had been deployed as they noticed their students withdrawing, followed by "a high level of truancy or of aggressive behaviour." Del's behaviour certainly did change when his step-father was deployed (E6 and Fn 2/4). Likewise, teachers involved in this research could tell when a child had received a posting order at home as they could see that child 'withdrawing' from their friends at school, preparing to leave and, perhaps, trying to protect themselves from the pain of eventually having to say goodbye (A3). Over time, it might be questioned whether the four children considered it worth investing in real friendships at all. Keeping friendships on a more 'acquaintanceship' level might make moving on less difficult. However, in failing to interact fully with their peers (E8), their experience of education could be different as social skills are not fully developed. If we consider that school is a unique social world then having less intense relationships with friends can only detract from their whole 'educational experience'.

Mobility and the Army Parent

Turning now to the parents of the children in this study, we can see how the ways in which they are influenced by mobility can affect an army child's educational experiences. Some army parents moving to a new posting, particularly if they are moving between countries, find it difficult to visit schools before moving (P4). As a result, the decision about which school to send their child to can be made very quickly on moving to the new area. A parent's choice of school can be influenced by neighbours or regimental colleagues from previous posting areas who might claim to 'know about' the schools in the new posting area (P1, P2, P3, P4 and P5). However, this knowledge might well be out of date, based on a posting several years before, and is certainly based on peoples' own experiences that will not be the same as anyone else. It is clear, then, that mobility can result in some army parents having insufficient knowledge about local schools, which might lead to the incorrect choice of school for their child. In the same way that some army

parents do not have knowledge about schools, they are also unlikely to have knowledge of local teachers. Keller (2001:58) mirrors these findings concluding that, "military parents are less likely to know the 'right teachers' or develop a close relationship with a high school faculty member who knows the ropes." Families established in an area for some time might take it for granted that they know a teacher who they could go to for advice about their child's education. Army families might not automatically know who the best person in a school might be to answer a particular query or resolve an issue. Mobility, therefore, can hinder some army families' developing local knowledge which can provide families with the means of assessing which school is right for their child, as well as the means of knowing where to go if there is a problem.

Moving house might have a negative effect on a child's education in many ways. Packing up and leaving one quarter, cleaning the quarter to hand back to the DHE, travelling to the new quarter and unpacking possessions there are all time-consuming and stressful experiences. Whilst the serving member of the army will have the distraction of a new job to go to, the remaining parent will have to oversee the move to the new house, as well as deal with other issues such as registering for a new dentist. Added to this list of distractions is the simple fact that both parents and children alike are faced with meeting new neighbours and making new friends. At this time, it may be that some army parents will not even want to consider their child's education. The priority for them is simply 'coping' and 'getting by' as seen in Mrs Hobson and Mrs Turner's highly emotional reactions (P1, P4) on moving to Upton. Similarly, McKee et al. (2003:36) consider the experiences of children of oil-industry workers. All the children were now resident in one town in Scotland but had experienced mobility, to a greater or lesser degree, during their lives. McKee et al. discovered that, "children were clearly aware of, and sensitive to, the physical and emotional labour this [mobility] represented for the mothers." Until such time as the family are more established in their new environment, supporting the work of the school might be low down on the list of priorities – simply getting the child into a local school can be a personal triumph! Two parents involved in the research commented that, when they had arrived at the new posting area, local schools were full up (P3, P4). This resulted in several weeks of waiting before a place was obtained for their child. During this time, obviously, formal teaching and learning would not be going on and the army child's education might suffer.

Mobility and Schools

Turning now to what the children experience at school on a day-to-day basis, mobility can be seen to have an effect on the delivery of the curriculum of the two schools involved in this research. Nicholls and Gardner (1999) assess that one of the major issues pertaining to mobility in schools is the importance of continuity and progression in teaching and learning. Indeed, Cunningham (2001) citing Goldstein (1997) highlights that student mobility is a factor that can impact on school stability and, therefore, a school's effectiveness. We have seen how the lack of additional funding targeted at service children affected the two schools involved in this study, so that neither school were able to provide support specific to service children without diverting funds away from civilian children (E1, A2). Teachers involved in this research tried to support individual students who were new to their classrooms by suggesting ways of catching up work but this was dependent on the teacher having time to provide extra worksheets and the child actually wanting to do the work (A3, E4). At neither school visited for this research was it possible, due to funding restrictions, to provide an area in the school staffed by qualified teachers who could sit down with new students, find out what they had/had not covered, and help service children to catch up before integrating them into mainstream lessons. The impact, particularly at Key Stage Four, where new students can be totally overcome by new coursework and syllabus requirements, might be substantial. The two schools noted that if a new student was self-motivated they might carry out the work themselves (E4 and A3) but many students voted 'with their feet' and failed to catch up. As a result, they struggled in class. Damauer (1976:54) suggests that adolescents who moved frequently performed less well at school than students who were only "moderately mobile."

One way that the two schools involved in this research tried to overcome this situation was by using a 'spiral curriculum' whereby topics are revisited every year in increasing depth in order to allow new students to catch up. Once the scheme of work has been written and resources are bought, this presents little in the way of additional funding requirements for schools. However, one head of department involved in this research had decided to move away from the spiral curriculum model as she has felt that it had 'dumbed down' the curriculum for more gifted and talented students. (E7) The result was that fewer students had achieved higher grades at GCSE. In an era of competition between schools caused in part by the

publication of league tables, this head of department felt under pressure to change the curriculum so that some of her students might achieve higher grades. At the second school visited in this research, a similar change in curriculum to cater for the lower ability of students at the school (A3) had resulted in service children being negatively affected as the school had moved away from a syllabus used by SCE schools in Germany. The impact on those service children new to the school might be more negative.

Mobility can also be seen to have an effect on the work of the two schools. Here, the importance of a good working relationship between the army and schools are considered, as well as the effect of mobility on the transfer of records and a school's finances. Although these are not perceived to affect the army children involved directly, their indirect effect on their educational experiences might be seen as negative. The two schools in this research found it difficult to maintain good working relationships with local service personnel as evidence presented in interviews with many teachers suggested (E1, E2, E3, E4, E8 and E13). No sooner had the schools managed to identify 'key' personnel within the army hierarchy who might help them to overcome some of the difficulties caused by mobility, then that service member moves on. The process of making contacts has to begin again. And yet, as Williams and Mariglia (2002) assert, the onus should be on the military to support its personnel in their careers and welfare arrangements and not for other agencies to pick up the pieces. It might also be argued that possible outcomes of any relationship between army and school at a local level might also be made more difficult by the nature of mobility. The serving soldier will have up to two years only to achieve some sort of solution to the 'mobility and schools' problem (O1). As we have seen in previous chapters, the problem is complex and will necessitate a complex solution that, it might be argued, cannot be achieved over the course of one posting alone. It must be questioned whether the serving soldier will want to commit time and energy to finding a solution which they will not see within the 'lifetime' of their posting.

Turning to the issue of pupil records, army children move schools and moving schools results in the movement of pupil records (Spencer, 1976; Ofsted, 2002a). The two schools in this research (Fn 7/4/05, E3) chose to 'send' on the records with the army child to the next school so that information could be received immediately on that child's arrival. The safe arrival of records depends, therefore,

on the child or their parent handing over the records to the new school. As we have seen, however, moving from one quarter to the next can be a stressful experience (P4) and records can go missing in this way. Other schools might choose to forward records to the next school when they are contacted after the child has registered. This might result in a delay at the best or missing records at the worst, particularly if incorrect contact information about previous schools is given to the new school. An interview with a head of year (A3) indicated that there was even some discrepancy between what the parents said that they did (ie take files with them) and what, in reality, actually happened (ie no information being passed on at all). The outcome for the army children involved in this study, therefore, resulted in delayed or incomplete information (Fns 8/12 and 24/3) for their new teachers. Without this information and without the knowledge of the child gained from working closely with them over time these children might fail to have their individual needs met sufficiently when they move schools. It might be argued, therefore, that mobility can impact on their educational experiences by hindering their progression. The impact of constant mobility when this situation might occur over and over again presents a very worrying problem.

The impact on a school's finances can also be affected by mobility. The turnover of students the two schools in this research impinged on their ability to provide the correct resources for their intake (A2 and E9). With a single funding point (the pupil census being taken in January of every year) schools might find themselves with a very different number on roll to other points in the year. Schools may find themselves with insufficient or too much funding to provide education for their students as many students join and leave during the school year. In the case of too much funding, schools may find themselves having to 'pay back' money to local education authorities resulting in a deficit budget with all the implications that this can have on actual resources and job security for staff (Hansard, 2004). A further issue might compound this already complicated situation. Sometimes army children move into a school for only a few months before being posted on again. The result for schools is that they never get the chance to draw down funding for those students, in spite of having had to provide an education for them, thus using their resources, during their time at the school. The impact of this mobility for schools in high-mobility areas can be financial insecurity that can lead to insufficient levels of resourcing in schools (Dobson and Henthorne, 1999).

Ofsted's move to increasingly recognise the difficulties that schools in service areas can experience (as seen in their document, 2002a, see chapter two) might mean that these schools are more realistically compared to other schools in difficulty. In terms of inspection outcomes, this could result in schools in service areas being more appreciated for the work that they do with service children, in spite of the obvious difficulties of this. However, the 2:1 comparator as evidenced in E2, with two service children being roughly equal to one child claiming free school meals, does not carry additional funding from local education authorities or central government. The comparator helps to recognise the problem but does not provide any extra support to try and solve the problem. It appears that the issue has become increasingly recognised as a 'real' problem, but that few solutions are suggested to overcome it.

The Implications of Mobility

So what are the outcomes of all these influences on a child's educational experiences caused by mobility? Reference has already been made in chapter two to the link between mobility and attainment (Williams, 1971; Galton, Grey and Rudduck, 1999; Anderson et al. 2000, Strand, 2002, Strand and Demie, 2006). Turning specifically to the link between mobility and lower literacy scores, Marchant's (2002) analysis of assessment results in one Middle School in Dorset, near to a large army garrison, indicates that numeracy skills are in-line with the national norm, but that literacy skills "need[ed] greater attention for the majority of service pupils." The culture of the home can affect the ability of the army child to develop their literacy skills. This will be explored in section four of this chapter for, as Ofsted (2002a:2) state:

> "the relationship between pupil mobility and attainment is complex. It is difficult to isolate the effect of pupil mobility on attainment because it often occurs alongside other factors, such as a disrupted family life. Differences in the relationship between mobility and attainment also reflect differences between schools in their ability to manage mobility effectively."

With regard to literacy, Clay (1991:42) suggests that a child's "feelings of security and adequacy play an important role in achievement," particularly when it comes to developing literacy skills. A child who has experienced mobility in their education may be disadvantaged in the classroom. All four children in this research had attended at least four schools (D1, N1, K1 and S1) and, as such, had experienced the turbulence of moving schools several times. All four children

were seen to have lower results in English than in any other curriculum area. In chapter five, it was suggested that children attempt to 'neutralise' the process of moving schools as a means of coping with grief and insecurity (Keson, 1991). As such, it is questionable whether these four children ever came to terms with the issue of moving schools at all. Set against Clay's suggestion that security is a key feature of a confident literacy learner, it may be that these four children's turbulent lifestyles affected their ability to develop strong literacy skills at home and in school.

If a child moves time and time again then the effect might be two-fold. Firstly, one teacher suggested (E1) that it would be highly unlikely that a mobile child will be able to follow one single reading scheme through to its conclusion. As a result, literacy development will mirror that of work in other curriculum areas – students will find that they have missed some topics and have repeated others. Secondly, if a child makes several moves, it was suggested (Fn 4/4/05) that it is likely that they will miss out on some of the early intervention schemes that can pick up on children with low literacy skills and help them to catch up. It is possible, therefore that by the time an army child's needs have been identified and an early intervention package has been put together, that child will have moved on again. (E1) Added to the earlier assertion that schools might not want to invest resources in children who are likely to move on quickly (O1), it is clear to see how some army children might slip through the net. It was also suggested that the issue of time is also apparent when considering special educational needs more generically. Due to time constraints caused by two-year postings, army students may not have their special needs correctly identified, assessed and provided for. Schools have commented on the amount of time that a good SEN assessment can take. One teacher cited the example of an army child who had already moved posting before he was able to be seen by the Educational Psychologist (E1).

In conclusion, the researcher suggests that mobility might affect the experience of education of the four army children involved in this research in several ways. Influences such as funding, movement of staff, systems and policies can affect schools' abilities to work effectively for the benefit of these children. An additional factor is that of the social impact of mobility (the impact on the army students,

their parents and teachers) that can influence how these children relate to the whole concept of education itself.

3 – THERE IS A CLASH OF CULTURES BETWEEN THE ARMY AND THE SCHOOL

What is Culture?

In this section, the researcher's view of culture is presented and the opposing cultures of the army and the world of the school are considered. Finally, the various 'clashes' between these cultures are examined in terms of the impact on the educational experiences of the individual army children.

Geertz (1975:89) outlined culture as being:

> "an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life."

There can be seen to be a similarity amongst other authors in the concept of and meaning of culture (Bouveresse, 1999; Bruner, 1996; Harker, 1990; Mahar et al. 1990 and Faubion, 2001). As outlined in chapters two and four, the culture of the army and the culture of the school can be understood to have evolved over time, emerging from what its participants say and do. Particularly pertinent to understanding the army 'culture' is the means by which a person can become part of a group culture. Buchanan and Hyczynski (2001:122) suggested that individuals become part of a culture through a process of "acculturation" in which "an individual's pattern of behaviour, and their values, attitudes and motives, are influenced to conform with those seen as desirable in a particular organisation, society or subculture." This sense of 'acculturation' has resonance with Bruner, who comments that "our ways of doing things skilfully reflect implicit forms of affiliating with a culture that often go beyond what we 'know' in an explicit form" (1996: 153). Bruner also refers to "extended intelligence" (p 154) that might suggest that army families 'become' army families by sharing a set of values, traditions and understandings.

The Culture of the Army and the Culture of Schools

As chapter four described, the army has a unique culture. The regiment provides each family with an identity and an affiliation. Along with affiliation to a regiment can come a sense of rivalry between regiments, as well as between the three services that make up the British Military, that can be displayed at regimental competitions, as well as in the examples of folk-lore used by army families. An example of this evident in this research could be seen in one army mother's mixture of fear and fascination when discussing the house cleaning for her first 'march out' (P3). Many British army regiments have a long history that brings with it a set of traditions and mores experienced by all members of a family. For example, many regiments hold 'family days' on dates important to the regiment – such as dates of important battles that the regiment might have fought. There are also expectations about the way that men, women and children are expected to behave at regimental events. There are more visible signs of identity within the army, coming from the rank that a soldier will hold. On the outside, this rank will be displayed on a soldier's uniform, on the epaulettes, whilst the rank can bring with it other forms of identification – a house according to the rank of the soldier, being called by that rank, for example, 'sir' for an officer or warrant officer, 'sarge' for a sergeant. The army uses a language that might not be understood by an outsider such as calling a house a 'quarter', describing moving house as 'being posted' and leaving a house as 'marching out'. Even the children involved in this research made use of the army argot – one child described another by using the diminutive name of his father's regiment (D1). Addresses can also identify families as living in army quarters or civilian houses.

Like the army culture, the world of education retains many values, traditions and shared understandings that suggest that schools have a culture of their own. Like the army, the world of education has its own language that can be difficult for an outsider to understand. The British Educational Research Association, for example, requested that all British participants at the BERA conference 2004 should explain all British educational references so that these references could be readily understood by foreign participants. In England, education is described in Key Stages, cumulating in national testing (SATs). Individual schools can use labels for subject areas and policies that can only be understood within the context of that school. Generally, schools work to a timetable that requires students to be present between the hours of 8.30am and 3.30pm with small

variations, whilst holiday patterns divide up extended periods of work with half-term holidays and extended breaks. Schools tend to have their own uniform, regulations and ways of doing things that may reflect small variations in local character. There is an unwritten expectation that children will attend one primary school and then go on to another secondary school, seen most obviously on the Common Transfer Document. For all Key Stage transfers, space is given for the new and old schools only, rather than any other schools students might have attended previously. This suggests an expectation that students will have attended only one school prior to transfer. The National Curriculum outlines a programme of study which cumulates in national patterns of testing. Entry forms to these tests are filled out months in advance of testing, suggesting that one expectation is that children will attend schools without any breaks during key examination stages in their school careers. SATs results are also sent home along with teacher assessments for subjects that assumes that teachers will have had long enough to build up a clear picture of a child's ability in that particular subject area. There are many ways, therefore, in which a culture of long-term relationships and experiences is assumed to exist within the school system.

The Clash of Cultures

A clash between these two cultures can be seen to exist in three areas – mobility, identity and attitudes. Firstly, with regard to mobility, as discussed more fully in section two of this chapter, the traditional pattern of postings within the army is one of moving every eighteen months to two years. This culture of movement clashes with the education system's culture of stability – whereby children are required to progress through Key Stages and are examined on their progress within the Key Stage through the use of SAT examinations. The school system is, obviously, geared up for some mobility within it – traditionally, schools in the UK are arranged on a two-tier system, requiring pupils to move between schools at the end of Key Stage Two. As a result, schools carry out a lot of preparatory work with pupils at the end of their primary years preparing them for secondary school. The mobility of the army child, however, involves movement between, as well as within, Key Stages. Neither of these are seen to be a 'natural' or 'normal' part of the education process. The result, within the two schools involved in this research, was a variety of policies for mid-year transfers with the onus, which will be discussed in section five of this chapter, placed on the child to integrate into the new school environment.

Mobility can have an effect on different expectations about time-frame and could be seen in one school when a teacher 'advertised' a school skiing trip which would take place a year after the initial information was passed on to the students. At the time, the researcher commented in the field notes how many of the students present would actually be at the school in a year's time, or whether they would have been posted on? (Fn 5/4/05) Similarly, teachers referred to students' previous examination experiences such as their SATs results, or future examinations, even though it would be highly unlikely that the students would be there to take them (Obs 24/3 and 10/6). Furthermore, one school continued to display the artwork of students who had already left (Fn 9/3) as, in a sense, the pace of change at the school did not reflect that of the army students. The difference in pace was also seen in the way that staff in one school complained that visits by support staff, such as the school's Educational Psychologist, did not match the turnover of pupils, so that a pupil could come in and have left by the time any support strategies had been organised for them (Fn 22/1 and E1).

Attendance issues for the army families involved in this research might also be indicative of a clash between the mobile army and stable school cultures. It is possible that absence rates for army students could be affected by the fixed 'rest and recuperation' dates of serving parents, with leave having to be taken when it was given, rather than when it was requested. Absence rates can also be affected by a soldier's operational tour deployment. One participant, for example, had time off school to look after his mother when his father was deployed to Basra (D4) whilst another expressed his sadness at having a family holiday cancelled because his father's leave pattern had been changed (Ob 11/2). Within one of the schools in this research, this translated to absence rates that were "slightly higher than the average" (Fn 13/10). However, these attendance rates would have been measured against national averages without consideration for the context of the local area.

With regard to the army's response to mobility, the army took some account of the students' need for stability during term-time, with a commitment to try and move families during the school holidays only. However, in reality, troop movements continued to happen as and when it was necessary. The army's policy to allow families to retain quarters in the first posting area was only available in the term before public examinations (Fn 16/6). As such, the army did not view the GCSE

course as being a two-year commitment from students. One school had experienced difficulties when a Gurkha regiment had moved into the neighbouring garrison. Although the army would have had experience of working with Nepali soldiers and families, they did not share this with the school. Instead, one of the school staff researched the Nepali culture on the internet and delivered a short information talk to staff, so that they might become aware of the cultural and ethnic differences of the students and how might be the best way of dealing with this (Fn 4/4/05).

It was acknowledged by some of the army parents in this research that involvement in their children's schools was difficult if the family was constantly on the move (Fns 7/4/05 and Fn 25/11). This might result in parents not feeling part of a community and getting involved either with a school's Parent/Teacher Association or on the governing body (E13). Certainly, with regard to military representatives on a school's board of governors, both schools visited as part of the study indicated that they had had difficulties with this. Military governors attended meetings infrequently:

> "they rarely attend meetings and recently there has been a very poor record. I'm not saying it's disinterest, you know the guy's on active service, things like that, it's nobody's fault" (A2).

Meanwhile, one school considered that military governors thought that their job was only a 'duty' that resulted in them not taking the work seriously (Fn 12/12). The result of this lack of involvement might be two-fold. Not only did the army parents in this research fail to find out more about their child's school and become involved in their education but the two schools also failed to find out more about the community that they served. In this way, the gulf between the two cultures is never breached and a vicious circle of disinterest evolves.

The second clash, then, can be seen in the army's identity in that the army children in this research did not always have their distinctive army background recognised by their schools. During the course of this research, it was rare to see examples of everyday army life within the two schools. The pupils' previous home and school experiences were something of an oddity for the receiving schools. Students' different accents were recognised by staff and local students alike (Fn 5/04/05 and Ob 7/1) and there was no sense of either school 'accommodating' the

army culture. In neither school were there information posters on the wall about the army, nor was there a sense of 'celebrating' the fact that pupils had lived in a variety of places (Fn 4/4/05, Fn 13/10, Ob 13/11). Furthermore, opportunities to 'celebrate' the pupils' unique home backgrounds were lost within the delivery of the curriculum (Ob 7/1). There was an absence of school work drawing on the experiences of life as an army child, displays in corridors that highlight the work of the soldiers living locally (Fns 13/11 and 4/4/05) or links with locally based soldiers and officers who might act as mentors to students in the school. Schools in areas with a high percentage of ethnic minority students, however, often make use of these connections and celebrate the differences within school time. It was often possible to see how the culture of the army could be stigmatised rather than celebrated by the two schools, with staff and students alike talking openly about the difficulties that the army population created for the life of the school (E14, E2 and A2). The army could be viewed as both a 'threat' and an 'opportunity' by teachers (Fn 13/11).

The third aspect of army life, that of maintaining a stoical outlook and 'getting on' with life (O6), produced in the four army children involved in this research a self-reliance which might make it difficult for them to ask for the help of their teachers. This can be seen to clash with their schools' ethos of being caring and supportive communities, as seen in their schools' prospectuses. As a result, the four children could fail to seek guidance from their teachers on a day-to-day basis or, more worryingly, at key moments in their educational careers, when they move school and have to ascertain what work they will need to catch up. This is not to say, however, that their teachers would not monitor the progress of students in their care, nor would they fail to ask proactively whether students need extra help or assistance. It is rather a case that the four children, due to this emphasis on stoicism, might be unable to ask for help in the first instance and could fail to respond to offers of help more generally.

The Implications of the Clash of Cultures

The outcome of this cultural clash can be seen in many ways. Firstly, the army's culture of mobility, discussed in detail in section two, can be seen to affect the individual students, teachers and schools. It was suggested that constant mobility might lead to social difficulties for these children and their teachers, as well as attainment issues. Secondly, the clash in cultures might result in the children's

cultural experiences being ignored and devalued by their schools. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) describe the way that culture can reproduce itself through education. The education system is seen to reproduce the dominant or hegemonic form of a society's culture. They consider that:

> "one of the least noticed effects of compulsory schooling is that it succeeds in obtaining from the dominated classes a recognition of legitimate knowledge and know-how ... entailing the devaluation of the knowledge and know-how they effectively command" (1977: 42).

Thus, the "knowledge and know-how" of the minority sections of society can be over-ruled and dis-empowered. Similar arguments are presented by Bourdieu (1976), Giroux (1981) and Harker (1990). In this way, the issue of the culture of the army failing to be recognised by the two schools might result in the army becoming 'invisible' in these schools. As a result, some of the unique aspects of these children's identity are not recognised. This might result in these four children feeling like the 'other', feeling 'different' and, generally, feeling inadequate. It can result at one extreme with there being a sense of competition between the army and civilian cultures, with civilian children failing to interact with their army peers and vice-versa. Teaching staff in both schools commented that some army boys had developed strong, 'macho' personas (E10, E13, A2) that put them in conflict with many of their peers. It is possible that, in failing to have their unique identity recognised, these army boys had exaggerated aspects of their military lifestyle as a way of coping with the sense of invisibility.

It was certainly possible to see a heightened sense of justice (of what was 'right' and 'wrong') within the four children involved in the research (Obs 23/2, 13/5 and 10/6). This sense of justice might have developed from the army's commitment to stand up for what is right. A further consideration is that, by being made invisible, these children created a natural 'enemy' in their teachers. The concept of the 'enemy' can be seen very clearly within the army's traditions. By feeling like the 'other' these children are interpreting this tradition within their own day-to-day realities. In chapter five it was possible to see that the army children did not ask for help from their teachers nor confide in them. One child's comment, "it's like, you never leave your flock, you stay with them," (Ob 23/2) indicated that he felt a part of a wider group ethic, or flock, which identified with the values of group cohesion and staying true to the group above all other. The concept of group

ethic is one the army holds dear – recent decorated acts of bravery have included examples of soldiers demonstrating acts of extraordinary courage to assist their fellow platoon members. And yet, this work ethic did not seem to extend to families who were in trouble. Concern has been voiced nationally (Fn 16/6) that families are not admitting to have children with special needs for fear that this would impact negatively on future promotions for the serving member. An interview with an LA Officer (E12) revealed that service families were often reluctant to inform schools of their service background, for fear of being labelled.

Lareau (1997) describes some of the values of military such as obedience and conformity that should advantage the military children in schools, as these values should help them to identify with the similar core values of schooling. It should be that both 'pull in the same direction' but the reality, in the two schools visited, was of two systems clashing with each other. The irony is that these schools and the army are both instruments of state and should, theoretically, share the same assumptions and practices in order to "provide legitimacy to the dominant society's institutional arrangements and interests" (Giroux, 1981: 40).

In many senses, therefore, the four children were 'at odds' with the education system. Due to their unique home background, their mobile lifestyle and the unique coping strategies they develop as a result, they do not fit the reality of life in their schools. The policies and practices in UK schools appear to have been developed for children who lead a more stable lifestyle and come from 'recognised' ethnic backgrounds. Ultimately, therefore, the clash in culture between the army and the school might lead to failure for these army children.

4 – THE CULTURE OF THE HOME HAS AN EFFECT ON THE EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCES OF THE ARMY CHILDREN

The importance of the home in supporting the learning of individual children is recognised by researchers (David et al. 1993) and politicians alike (DfES, 1997). Indeed, so strong was the desire to recognise the home that the then Secretary of State for Education (David Blunkett) considered that, "families [were] the first teacher" (DfES, 1997:3). For many children, as Alexander (1997:81) points out, families are the "constant reality" and it is for this reason that it is necessary to consider the role of the parent in supporting the educational experiences of the

child. The 'culture' of the home can be considered to be the attitudes and experiences of the parents and their effect on the parents' interaction with their children. In the case of army children, these experiences will involve life experiences common to anyone, such as the educational experiences of the parents. However, added to this is the important factor of the experience of life in the armed forces and how this is experienced within the family home. There are five aspects of the home culture of the army child that might affect their educational experiences. These are the impact of the educational experience of parents (particularly mothers), the absence of the father and the mother's ability to cope in his absence, relationships within the family, the rank of the serving soldier and mobility. These will be addressed here in turn.

The Involvement of the Mother

David (2005) presents an overview of research that suggests that mothers are more involved in the educational experiences of their children than fathers. Ribbens McCarthy with Kirkpatrick (2005) describe this involvement as 'mediation' suggesting that mothers are the ones to help their children to negotiate the tensions between home and school. Reay (1998) considers that, although fathers occasionally help out with school-work, mothers help their children on a daily basis and are the ones who seek to maintain contact with their children's teachers. Understanding the ability of the mothers involved in this research to get involved with their child's education is likely to be a key element in order to understand how and why their children achieve at school.

One of the keys to understanding why it is that some mothers can support their children's education is the experience that the mothers had at school themselves (Reay, 2005). For three of the mothers involved in this research a poor experience of education (or, in one mother's case, a *different* experience of education) may go some way to explain their lack of involvement in the school lives of their children. Three of the women did not attend school events such as school concerts, parent/teacher social events, or, importantly, the school's post-Ofsted inspection meeting. Their presence at school could only be seen at 'compulsory' attendance events, for example, their child's review day. Furthermore, one mother, whilst being aware that her son's special educational needs were not being met, did not challenge the school or ask for an explanation of this. Instead, she waited until review day, some three months' later, to talk

about her concerns (P4 and Fn 28/6). One mother demonstrated her appreciation of the German way of schooling when she commented about her son that:

> "I have had to argue for therapy and then schooling, but you don't do this in England, it's all education, education and if they're not in education you can't do anything" (P1).

One mother's experiences were particularly different to the others. Although she left school at the age of 16, her experiences gained from working within the education sector would have been invaluable. Certainly, unlike the other women, she had a good understanding of the education system and was able to talk with some knowledge about what she would do if she were unhappy with an aspect of her child's education (P3). Unlike the other parents, she attended the school's post-Ofsted inspection meeting and was an active presence at this (Fn 25/11). This suggested that she appreciated the importance of the inspection process and was confident in her part as a parent in the proceedings.

Capital, as discussed in section one of this chapter, is seen to be the way in which individuals have the means to exist in society. For Bourdieu, capital represents, "the principle underlying the immanent regularities of the social world" (1997: 46). One of the forms of capital, cultural capital, can be recognised in, amongst other things, educational qualifications. A student's ability to succeed in school is dependent on a family's ability to support their schooling – that support can be seen in all manner of things, including the parents' own educational background as well as the family's overall support of education. For Bourdieu, the emergence of cultural capital creates, "a hypothesis which [makes] it possible to explain the unequal scholastic achievement of children originating from the different social classes" (1997: 47). Reay (2005:30) compares the experiences of middle-class and working-class mothers in supporting their child's education and suggests that:

> "it was cultural capital which facilitated this weaving in and out of different roles [complimenting the education that went on in the classroom, compensating for this provision and modifying it] and provided the middle class mothers with choices that were not open to their working class counterpart."

The negative experiences that the working class mothers in Reay's study had at school impacted on their ability to mediate with schooling – like some of the army wives in this study they simply did not have the confidence to get involved with schooling due to their own perceptions of their failure.

Reay (2000) also draws on the work of Nowotny (1981) and Allatt (1993) to explain the concept of 'emotional capital', explaining that this can be understood "within the bounds of affective relationships of family and friends and encompasses the emotional resources you hand on to those you care about" (Reay, 2000: 572). In other words, emotional capital can be seen in the 'quality time' a mother might spend with their child, as well as the self-confidence and the ensuing self-esteem she might generate within this child. Whilst other forms of capital can be understood in terms of their link with educational achievement, for emotional capital the link is less so. However, as Reay comments, whilst emotional involvement does not differ greatly by social class, working-class children are less likely to be passed on emotional capital by their mothers due to "poverty, insufficient educational knowledge and lack of confidence" (2000: 575). Emotional well-being, Reay considers, is not wholly evident in a "culture of survivalism" (ibid: 581). For the two girls in this study, whose self-esteem issues had been picked out by their school, having mothers who, because of their already hectic 'army' lifestyles, could not invest emotional capital in their daughters, the ability to build their confidence levels and, thus, go on to make greater progress at school might be severely hampered.

The educational experiences of army parents are considered to be very important in understanding how education is supported (or not) within the home. Many army soldiers joining the ranks may not have a high level of education since it is possible to join the army at aged seventeen with a minimal level of qualifications. These soldiers' decisions to leave school early on and join the army may have been affected by negative experiences at school. If this is the case then these parents might not be in the best position to support their own children through the education system today. Negative experiences for the parents may have involved poor relationships with teaching staff or failure to make progress. If army parents made insufficient progress at school then, academically, they may not be in a strong position to support their child's learning now. If army parents had poor relationships with teaching staff then they may continue to view teachers as the 'other' and continue to have a negative view of the education system. As such they may be unlikely to challenge problems that their child might be experiencing. More positive experiences of school, however, might lead parents to be more supportive of the work that schools try to achieve. In a sense, a more positive experience of school could equip a parent to work with the school for the benefit

of the child. The age of the soldier when joining the army, his experiences of school and the experiences of his wife could help to explain to what extent they will, as parents, be able to support their child through the education system.

A second aspect common to all army wives is the frequency with which their husbands are away from home, either on exercise or on deployment. The ability of the army wife to cope during their husband's absence, to continue to keep their home running and manage their children's behaviour could be an important consideration. Both Reay (2005:28) and Vincent and Martin (2005) have similar views on this. Reay comments that:

> "working class mothers, particularly if they were bringing up children without the financial and emotional support of a partner, were very hard pressed, and talked of how little free time they had after finishing paid work."

In a similar way, whilst the army wives in this study were able to rely on partners for financial support, they were often without the emotional support of their husbands for long stretches, having to bring up their children single-handedly. Vincent and Martin (2005:128) describe this sort of situation as one of "survival" and comment that women in these circumstances often do not have the, "energy, activity and confidence for interaction with educational institutions." In better circumstances, other women might be able to use their free time, afforded to them by the presence of a supportive partner or the economic ability to buy in home support, in order to support their child's learning in the home or to volunteer at their child's school.

For one of the women involved in this research, her experiences as an army child would have made her wholly realistic and aware of the exigencies of service life. She was clearly a formidable lady, laughing that she was "the boss" at home (P3) and showing that she took decisions to create stability for her family as she had requested that they retain a quarter so the boys would not have to change schools in spite of the fact that this would mean more separation for her and her husband. For the other women, marrying into the army meant that this was their first experience of service life. One participant spoke movingly about his mother's reaction to his step-father's absences (D3). Indeed, his mother's alcoholism may well have been an indication that she did not cope during her husband's absences. Another mother admitted that her step-sons nearly ignored her and

played up when their father was away (P2). The last mother involved in this research suggested that, although she survived the separations, it may well have been at the cost of her own personal happiness (P1).

One mother was clearly a part of the army structure. Her social life revolved around her regimental friends and she described her husband's regiment as "my regiment" (P3). Unlike the other mothers involved in the research, she was a part of the army culture and had been 'acculturated' (Buchanan and Hyczynski, 2001:122) into the army, accepting its attitudes and identity. Contrastingly, the other mothers admitted that they did not rely on the support of other army wives (P4) whilst one wife intimated a sense of actively seeking to be apart from the army when she commented that she was "not one of those women who wears her husband's rank on her sleeve and says that she doesn't have much to do with the army" (Fn 18/9). Of all the women, she was the only one to have the presence of her family nearby suggesting that she could lean on other people for support during her husband's absences. One wife was geographically isolated from her regiment in her quarter and had recounted why she no longer spoke to other army wives (P1). She had also admitted that she had not had the chance to think about her daughter's education because she had been so worried thinking about the problems with her son. These differences with regard to the mothers' attitude towards the army could impact on their ability to seek support during their husband's absences and, thus, cope on their own. In being able to cope on their own, they might be more likely to be able to support their child's experiences at school.

In summary, then, parental absence seems to occur more and more frequently in service life with the serving parent (usually the father) spending time away from home on exercise usually for a couple of weeks, on extended tours of duty for six months, or on unaccompanied service of up to two years. In some family situations (P3), the mother is able to cope during the father's absence. She capably takes over the running of the house, the bringing up of the children and, in some examples, continues with her own work. In these cases, it appears that the father becomes less a part of the family structure, with the mother assuming his place during his absence. The mother's ability to move smoothly from one set of family dynamics to another could help to explain the educational performance and success of army children at these times. If the mother can cope whilst the

father is away, the child is less disrupted and more able to concentrate on their school-work. As we saw with one child, however, his mother found it difficult to cope whilst his father was away. He felt that he had to assume a lot of his father's responsibilities and care for his mother and younger siblings (D3). The result, for him, was that education literally became second place as he had other things to worry about.

Parental absence and home-coming are part and parcel of the unique army culture. Anticipation about what the home-coming of the absent parent will be like can contrast with the actual experience of home-coming and may have an influence on the army child's focus on school at that time (Bell and Schumm, 2000). Chandler (1991) and Rosen and Durand (2000) hypothesise that some families are able to allow the father back into the family structure on his return with little disruption, as seen in the case of Nick, whilst others might find that the whole process of reunion is fraught as mum or, indeed, older siblings who have taken on the 'father' role, resent having to give up the position that they once had, as in the case of Del. The actual home-coming can be an extreme disappointment when compared to the perceived event. Del's words summed up the anti-climax for him:

> "we get the house all smart and he doesn't normally get in until about eight o'clock in the evening, so by that time we're all tired. So then it's back to normal again. He's tired and is normally jetlagged and Matthew and Richard jump all over him, so he doesn't normally speak much to me" (D3).

McCubbin and Dahl (1976) and Watanabe and Jensen (2000) suggest that longer absences might be better for the family since these allow mothers and children to adjust to life in a single-parent household, whilst shorter absences do not allow families to get used to the new status quo. The key to understanding the father's absence, its impact on the home culture and subsequent effect on the educational experience of the army child, could lie in both the ability of the mother to cope during the absence, as well as the length of that absence.

The Involvement of the Father

Turning now to the role and involvement of the fathers in this study, one way of understanding the impact of the father's involvement is to look at life at home when the father is not away on exercise. To what extent does the father involve himself in the daily life of his children and their educational experiences? Of all the fathers, only Nick's was ever seen in school (Fn 25/11). Even though he was

unable to attend Nick's review meeting (Fn 28/6), he had looked at Nick's report and had made comments that he had asked his wife to mention to the teacher. Nick, as a result, was able to comment, "my dad is always there for us" (N3). In none of the other cases was 'dad' a strong presence. Shelley mentioned that she sometimes went to her step-father for advice about homework (S3) but Del and Katie made it clear that they would ask their mothers (D3 and K3). For these three children, the involvement of their father was sporadic and limited. Clare (2000:169) comments on the "significant positive relationships between positive father engagement and intelligence, academic achievement and social maturity at ages six and seven." Boys require a father's involvement at an early age, whilst girls are more in need of their father's attention during their teenage years. Father involvement is an issue common to civilian and service children alike. But given the exigencies of service life, the need to establish a quality relationship with a child whilst at home is perhaps more important. As O'Brien comments (2004:15) "parenting quality is a more important predictor of good child outcomes than frequency of visits."

When considering the culture of the home, the rank within the army of the father should be considered as this can form part of the army family's understanding and outlook on life. As already discussed in chapter four, the rank of a soldier in the British Army brings with it certain rights such as bigger/better housing and better pay but also certain responsibilities such as the care and management of soldiers in one's platoon and the need to lead one's men by example. For a sergeant or warrant officer, the sense of leading by example might also extend to his family. To this extent, the higher the rank of the soldier, the more it might be perceived that, as he can manage his men, so should he be expected to 'manage' his family. Durand (2000:83) reports, in relation to the US military, that senior NCO wives' views are "consistent with the traditional view that a wife's role is to support her soldier husband and to provide care for her family," underlining the expectations of military families. As such, one teacher (E1) had commented that there were tensions in some military families when students needed additional support and the families did not come forward to ask for it. The military families in question felt that they should not have the sort of children who required additional support. Both Del and Katie came from home environments where their father was still very much at the beginning of his military career, whilst Nick and Shelley had fathers who were of the rank of sergeant or above. Shelley's mother had talked

about being approached by the SCE when they were having difficulty with one of her step-sons, rather than actually asking for the support themselves (P2), whilst Nick's mother commented that she would not discuss problems she might have with Nick's schooling with any of her neighbours (P3). As such, in both families, there may well have been an underlying tension to at least be seen to be performing well at school. For Nick, this tension also translated to his world-view. In his final interview (N4) he revealed a deep unhappiness about army life that he was clearly uncomfortable about discussing. To do so would have been disloyal to his parents and, perhaps, have affected his father's 'standing' amongst his men.

The issue of the soldier's rank might have some influence on a child's educational experiences, therefore. The social mores of the army strongly influence soldiers and officers to 'do' according to their rank. In the case of education, there is an expectation that officers will send their children to boarding school (Jolly, 1987). Whilst the funding for a boarding school education is open to all ranks, in practice, this is not something that has been widely taken up below the rank of Warrant Officer (O6). There is something of an expectation that lower ranks will send their children to local schools. Within the course of this study, it was discovered that a soldier's own previous experience of boarding school might lead him to send his child to boarding school himself (P5). If that soldier or his wife had no experience of a boarding school education then they were unlikely to claim the boarding school allowance. The issue of whether a boarding school education is 'better' for a child, resulting in 'better' educational experiences is contentious (Hutchinson 2004; O1). However, it does limit the child's experience of mobility in education that, as outlined in section two of this chapter, can play a major part in creating negative educational experiences.

Relationships within the Family

Relationships between family members can affect educational experiences for any child, civilian or military. However, an interview with one headteacher (E2) suggested that there were more examples of extended families within the army community. By this, the headteacher meant that many army children were living with step-parents, step-siblings and half-siblings. As we saw in Shelley's case, this sometimes resulted in an acrimonious atmosphere at home (S2, S4). Shelley's mother had made decisions about Shelley's education based on the

previous educational experiences of Shelley's step-brothers (P2). Since the family had experienced a lot of trauma finding the right school placement for one of Shelley's step-brothers, Shelley's mother was determined that they would not move again and further disrupt the children's educational experiences. Shelley's step-brothers had experienced their difficulties before Shelley and her mother joined the new family unit and yet these experiences continued to affect Shelley's mother and therefore, Shelley. This issue, of family relationships, can compound all of the other issues and can influence a child's experience of education regardless of mobility, rank and the issues of father's absence of parents' own educational experiences.

In section two, the impact of mobility on the development of literacy skills was discussed. There are other home factors that might also affect the ability of the army child to develop their literacy skills. Carless (1990) comments that parents may have other pressures on their time at home so may not be able to listen to their child reading. All four children in this study had at least one sibling who would also be competing for their parents' attention. All the children commented that they used to read to their mothers (D3, S3, N3 and K3) and only in Nick's case was this still on-going. For Del, Nick and Shelley, particularly, family-life was affected by father's absence. This would have resulted in their mothers having to run the home single-handedly and might have meant that there was less time to focus on homework and listening to the children read (Reay, 2005). For Katie, the issue was perhaps more complicated as her mother was not a native English speaker. For all four children, therefore, there are issues about the level of support available to them at home. When other factors such as father absence and cultural differences are present, reading and supporting literacy at home may not take the priority that it did before.

In conclusion, there are many aspects of life within the home that can affect the four children's educational experiences. Some of these aspects of the home culture such as rank, mobility and a father's absences are unique to the army way of life. Some such as the educational experiences of the parents and relationships within families can be seen in any family. However, together, these issues form a unique home culture that can either help or hinder the children at school.

5 – THERE IS A SENSE THAT NEITHER THE ARMY NOR SCHOOLS UNDERSTAND THE EXPERIENCE OF EDUCATION OF THE ARMY CHILDREN

The two schools where the research was undertaken and the four children's wider home life can both be seen to be the sites where each pupil lives out their experiences, or *le champ du jeu* (the field of the game) (Bourdieu, 1976). In this section, government issues, links between the army and local schools, schools' and army policies and practices and peoples' attitudes are all explored in order to provide examples of the ways in which the two schools and the army fail to appreciate the experience of education of army children. It is suggested that, whilst the schools take an integrationist approach towards their army student, the army takes no responsibility at all for the education of army children.

Government Issues

At the level of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) there is an acknowledgement that mobility does have an impact on the educational experiences of children (Ofsted, 2002a). Within this report, service children are noted as a group within the school-age population who might be particularly affected by this issue. However, as noted in chapter two, the report's recommendations to schools in high-mobility areas are few. The issue is highlighted but solutions are not suggested. The DfES also notes that service children are particularly vulnerable due to schools' admissions policies (DfES, 2002) and acknowledges that they might need to be treated differently to other children. These issues are compounded by the DfES' policy of not providing any additional funding to local education authorities in areas of high mobility. The former Schools' Improvement Minister acknowledged that this was the case and that this was not likely to change (Hansard, 2004) necessitating LAs and schools affected by mobility having to find the funding themselves or create 'innovative' solutions which require little funding. The responsibility for actually dealing with these problems is, therefore, firmly given back to LAs and their schools.

In chapter six it was seen that the national picture regarding funding specific to service children was mixed with some schools being offered some financial support (E12) whilst others did not (A2). In the case of Southshire LA, whilst they had identified the issue of turbulence in schooling they were not going about acting upon this issue in a meaningful way. The cultural issues of service children

raised in section three of this chapter were not recognised by the LA. The responsibility of dealing with the issue of service children's education was placed within the domain of individual schools rather than through a county-wide policy of sharing good practice. As such, any funding given out by the LA was not necessarily spent in a way which might have any meaningful impact on the education of army children specifically. Both central government and the LA involved in this research, therefore, can be seen to fail to take responsibility for the education of army children.

Links Between the Army and Schools

Links between the army and schools can be seen to have an impact on a school's ability to include army children (Williams and Mariglia, 2002). Both the schools involved in study and their local army representatives could be seen to fail in fostering any meaningful links. Indeed, at Upton, the relationships had deteriorated to the point of being negative and mistrustful. Teachers were angry that the army were not more involved in difficult student welfare cases (E1 and Fn 23/1). One senior teacher summed up the school's overall attitude, "the army are not interested in children" (E4). He had earlier commented that, "what we don't use is the army because it is such a nebulous organisation, it's very difficult to find anyone who could actually help you," suggesting that the school might not have done all that it could to develop meaningful links with the army locally to maintain a high level of support for army students. One member of staff, who had served as an officer in the army before coming into teaching, admitted that he had not been asked about his army experiences by anyone and, as a result, a wealth of information had been lost to the school (Fn 13/10). Whilst it might have been true that the army in Upton were not pro-active at maintaining links with the school, it would also be true to say that the school was not pro-active about understanding the army locally. In Alchester, however, the school, whilst struggling to maintain a connection with the army in the town, was not as negative about the army presence locally. As commented in section three of this chapter, the school found out about the Nepali culture themselves rather than relying on the local army for support (Fn 4/4/05). The school's philosophy was to develop "purposeful community links" (Fn 4/405) and this sentiment was displayed on the walls of every classroom, as well as being sent home to every parent in the Home/School agreement. The contrast between Upton and Alchester Schools appeared to be most obvious in this respect. At Alchester, links were made between home and

school, regardless of the student's home background, whereas as Upton, links between home and school were blurred and made more complicated by the school's difficult relationship with the army.

Policies and Practices

The army's policy of mobility has been discussed already within section two of this chapter. It was suggested that the army's two year cycle of postings has created short-term relationships between army personnel and local service providers that result in few long-term answers to local problems (O1). As it became apparent in Alchester, sometimes army personnel, whose primary responsibility was to liase with local services, are posted away on tours of duty themselves leaving their post vacant until their return (A2). The army has, until recently, offered little or no support to LAs that might help them to overcome many of the issues that mobility might bring about. In chapter four, the work of the Service Families Task Force (SFTF) was outlined. However, the SFTF's liaison policy (SFTF, 2004) to promote active links between army personnel and local services at a local level, was not seen to be flourishing (Hutchinson, 2004), so that local links were sporadic or, indeed, absent. Any support that these local army personnel might have been able to offer local service providers was limited. Nor was there any move on the part of the SFTF to monitor and evaluate how this policy was being carried out. As such, it was unlikely that changes would be made to local liaison initiatives.

Both the army's and the two schools' policies and practices could be seen as another way in which neither side demonstrate a full understanding of the education of army children. The army's stated policy in relation to local services in the UK is that services for army dependents should be provided by local service providers. In practice this means that local services such as medical and dental care and education should be organised and maintained by local NHS trusts and local education authorities. Whilst some of the larger garrisons operate Medical Reception Stations (doctors and dental surgeries) that can be accessed by army families, the army influence does not extend to schools in the UK. The exceptions are two boarding schools, one in Kent and one in Scotland, that are run for service children on behalf of the Ministry of Defence. Service children progressing through state education in the UK are incorporated into the local school system. The army's policy, therefore, places the responsibility of the

education of these children firmly within the hands of the LAs and their local schools.

Perhaps the over-riding philosophy of the army is that the army's primary responsibility is warfare – be that defence of the realm or the active engagement with foreign troops. At the Army Families Federation Conference (Fn 18/6) it was openly admitted that budgetary cuts for the Ministry of Defence had resulted in less money being made available for welfare issues. The primary concern of the policy makers had to be maintaining an active task force, equipped and ready to carry out its 'warfare' role. Meanwhile the Armed Forces Minister admitted at that conference that welfare issues were important as, without them, soldiers would not feel confident leaving their families behind and going off to war. However, without the necessary funding, welfare issues (including liaison with local schools) will never get off the ground. It should be noted that a recent initiative, the foundation of the National Association of State Schools for Service Children, has been primarily established by the CEAS. This marks a definite step forward but the CEAS, whilst helping to establish the group, has made it clear that it will be up to the individual schools to fund their membership of the group (O4). For service schools, already pushed by funding issues discussed, this may well prove to be unlikely.

The two schools appeared not to include army children fully, as evidenced in some of their polices and practices. Both the schools involved in this research had admissions processes that were understood, if not written down, or "procedures rather than policies" as one member of staff commented (E1). These involved being interviewed by a member of staff and being paired up with a student 'buddy.' Upton staff admitted that the induction process was, "something ... we could improve on, we don't do it as well as we could or should." (E3) At neither school was there evidence of a student booklet, giving information on the school from a student's point of view. For students who arrived during Key Stage Four, there was an expectation that they would catch up themselves on areas of curriculum they might have missed, as well as trying to hand in coursework (E4 and A3). At Upton, a senior teacher admitted that they "cobble[d] it through," (E4) and thought that having extra staff to manage transfers would be a valuable way of helping these students. At Alchester, where there were more staff available, the deputy headteacher commented that they did not "run anything especially for

army children" (A2). The onus, therefore, remained on the in-coming students to catch up. At both schools, it was admitted that, for less able students, a transfer in Key Stage Four was very difficult, "there are the ones that aren't so bright that can't cope with it," (A3) and, "you almost write them off" (E4).

In both schools, there were clear procedures for departing students (Fn 6/4/05 and E3) which involved giving the student a leaving form, getting them to approach all their teachers to return their books and obtain a final grade. The student's files were handed over to the student and they were expected to be given to the next school by the departing student. Handing over files might be potentially difficult at Upton, as pupil files were stored in many parts of the school and were difficult to find. In both cases, whilst the schools made some effort to induct new students and manage the transfer of departing students, a lot of the responsibility for a successful induction was placed with the new student, expecting them to settle into their new life and to manage the transitions themselves.

With regard to the two schools' curriculum choices, it can be seen that there had been a variety of decisions made which would affect the army students. The discontinued use of a 'spiral curriculum' (E7) and a scheme of work known to be used by an SCE school in Germany (A3), as well as curriculum decisions made in relation to Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) in both schools, meant that students transferring to and from SCE schools in Germany did not have their needs fully taken into account (Fn 26/5, Fn 5/4/05). In both schools, therefore, army children's previous experiences were not taken into account and, as a result, these children were expected to integrate by working with the curriculum on offer.

The issue of low literacy scores amongst the four army children is also presented within other sections of this chapter – in connection with mobility (section two) and the home culture (section four). At Alchester, the school had realised that literacy skills were low throughout the school. As a result, every classroom had a clear and comprehensive literacy policy displayed (Fn 7/4/05). Upton, too, had appointed a whole-school literacy co-ordinator (E5) but the Head of English was unsure to what extent the literacy strategies were being rolled out amongst teachers across the school. Both strategies concentrate firmly on the role of the teachers supporting literacy within the daily curriculum in school-time. In section

four, it was suggested that the army children's home circumstances affected their literacy development and yet, neither of the schools in the study had considered the home circumstances of the children that they sought to work with. Gregory (2003) presents four 'assumptions' that schools make regarding the teaching of literacy skills. Key to this discussion is the assumption that "the same home-reading programmes are suitable whatever linguistic ... background children come from" (2003: 265). If we extend Gregory's assertion of the home background being different linguistically to being different culturally, then it is easy to see how some of the practices of the (army) home, as outlined in sections three and four of this chapter, do not support Gregory's assumptions of home-school literacy support. Gregory, however, asks the questions:

> "in what ways might equality of opportunity be provided for pupils whose parents are not familiar with school literacy practices? Do we start by 'teaching' parents school literacy 'rules' ... or do we begin by learning about children's existing outside-school literacy knowledge and skills?" (2003: 275)

We saw in sections three and four how neither school fully appreciated the home (army) culture, instead, both schools chose to focus on classroom based literacy practice, thus falling into Gregory's assumption of a "one-size fits all" literacy policy and practice. By doing so, the schools placed an unrealistic level of expectation on the army children, anticipating that they would be able to benefit from the schools' existing literacy policies and not taking into account the impact of their lives at home.

Perceptions about army students were mixed in both establishments. In Upton, teachers perceived the army students to be flexible and able to cope well with change (E3) as well as being "like chameleons, they change their colours to suit the environment." (E4) Locally, army children were perceived to be "tough" (Fn 7/1) and one teacher (E6) admitted to being "surprised" that the students were so open to learning modern foreign languages. One teacher hinted that there was a feeling within the school that students were of low ability and, therefore, did not need to have new books (Fn 23/2). In one lesson, students laughed at an army student who spoke with an accent different to the rural accent of the area around Upton. (Ob 7/1) All of this suggested that the army students might be viewed differently within the school. Similarly, at Alchester School, staff commented on the social skills of army students (Fn 7/4/05) and mentioned their concerns that

army children might have lower basic skills (Fn 4/4/05). Alchester School was the only school in the local area not to have a subject specialism. Talking to the ICT staff (Fn 6/4/05) it was revealed that gaining specialist school status was hoped to raise the levels of self-esteem amongst students and staff. This suggested that, up to that point, the school had not had a positive image of itself and had not felt confident about its role more generally. This might have been a reaction to the difficulties imposed on the school due to its location and intake. In all senses, it seemed that the army children were viewed as being 'different' but this was not backed up by many policies or practices (as discussed earlier in this section) that might recognise this.

There were a few examples of pragmatic decision-making and practices in both schools. At Upton, military parents interpreted the school's request for parents to ask for support from military sources as laziness on the part of the school, in the sense that the school could not be bothered to access civilian support networks for students in difficulty (P5). However, the reality of the situation could be that teachers realised that military parents might be able to get support for their child quicker through military networks, rather than waiting on civilian waiting lists to see civilian support professionals (E1). Meanwhile, at Alchester, the school's literacy policy was a clear response to the low literacy skills throughout the school (Fn 7/4/05). There was also the sense, in both schools, of staff trying to establish a routine and maintain normality, in spite of the turbulence in student numbers. At both schools, some staff referred to events that had happened before the students came to the school and events which would, most probably, occur after they had left (Ob 24/3, Ob 10/6, 2 x Fn 5/4/05). There was the sense that the teachers involved wanted to get the students to think beyond their next move and view their education as some sort of continuum.

It could be that the schools involved in this research made use of the DfES' somewhat limited definition of inclusion focusing on special educational needs (DfES, 2000: para 7) rather than "valuing *all* [researcher's own emphasis] students and staff equally" (Booth et al., 2000:1) and, in doing so, failed to realise the importance of celebrating and working with the different cultural needs of their intake. This would be particularly plausible when considering the concept of 'cultures' discussed earlier in this chapter. The unique way of life of army families, described in section three as a culture distinct from the culture of schools, is

different. Army students are not, however, recognised as a distinct 'group' within the schooling system unlike other cultural groups, such as traveller children, who are allotted separate support services, as a result. Sheehy et al. (2005) feel that integration implies:

> "the need for a student to adapt to the school, rather than for the school to transform its own practices. The onus for change appeared to be on those seeking to enter mainstream schools, rather than on mainstream schools adapting and changing themselves in order to include a greater diversity of pupils" (2005: 18-19).

It is suggested, therefore, that these army children are expected to integrate into their schools and adapt to them as the two schools, through lack of funding and an unawareness of cultural differences, do not have the policies and practices to support their army students successfully.

The Implications of Integration

The outcome of this failure of the army to take responsibility for the education of army children and the schools' expectation that army children will integrate into them can be seen through this issue remaining stagnant. When Alchester School demonstrated the difference between service and civilian students' results and tried to treat the army students as a separate group, the school was berated by the army (A2). This contrasted with the SCE's perception that, "one of the things we need to combat is that idea that because it's a school with service children it's that that is responsible for the poor results" (O4). Amongst military circles, there did seem to exist a feeling that a service lifestyle could not impact on the experience of education of army students and, thus, on their ability to achieve. This failure to acknowledge one of the central areas of concern surrounding the education of the army child is understandable for, in doing so, the army might open themselves up to complaints from parents that the lifestyle 'imposed' on them might have a detrimental effect on their children's education. It does nothing, however, to move the issue forward and work together for some sense of resolution. As long as it is perceived that there is no issue, or that the issue is the responsibility of somebody else, then progress will not be made.

It might be said at an extreme level that the schools might use their army population to absolve them of any blame that might be attached to them in the failure of the education system to meet their particular needs. Upton School had

lobbied their Ofsted Inspection team very hard to accept the '2:1 free school meal comparator' which they hoped would help them to 'explain' some of the issues at the school (E2). Being compared to other schools in difficult circumstances, as a result of this, is fair but might lead to a tendency for schools to blame poor results on particular circumstances. In the market place into which education has evolved, with schools having to publish their results in league tables in order for parents etc. to make judgements about their efficiency, Upton and Alchester schools need to be able to explain why they achieve the examination results that they do. This might result in them blaming particular populations of children and trying to demonstrate that the various issues remain as 'somebody else's problem'.

It is noticeable that there are two groups which sit outside of this 'circle of blame' - the army parents and their children. It was seen earlier that the army parents in this research did not blame the army for any of the difficulties that they might have. Commentators suggested that there was a stoical attitude amongst army families that made them 'get on with it' and not challenge the army. (P1, P5 and O6) Perhaps this sense of stoicism had been passed on to their children as well as they did not complain about their experiences – indeed, as discussed in section one of this chapter, they clearly felt that their lifestyles were 'normal'. The parents did not intervene when their children had academic issues at school (Fn 28/6). The parental attitude was one of letting the four children have their own lives and not interfering. In any case, as discussed earlier, it was also evident that the parents clearly had an awful lot going on in their own lives which might make them feel less able to intervene on their children's behalf. Education, therefore, became the 'child's problem'. This contrasts with the four children's coping strategy of failing to take responsibility for their own learning, as discussed in section one, by not communicating with their teachers or working with staff to make up missed work. The result, therefore, is that, even at this very individual level, the children and their parents do not take responsibility for education. Education might be seen to be the duty of professionals – who, as we have seen in this section, whilst trying hard to engage with some of the issues, can often pass the responsibility on to somebody else.

In conclusion, it appears that the two schools expect their army students to integrate into the form of schooling that they can provide. The more unique

aspects of army life such as mobility, *life in another* country and being a member of a historical 'system' are not celebrated in the schools in the *same way that* aspects of other cultures might be. As a result, it can be concluded that, although there are varying elements of inclusive practices in the schools, they do not take full responsibility for the problems that army children encounter. Similarly, the army openly admits that its commitment to the education of army children is a 'subsequent issue' only (Fn 16/6). This has resulted in the perception amongst some of the teachers that the army "are not interested in children" (E4). As a result, the responsibility for the education of the four children involved in this research does not seem to be taken up by any key player and the children are left to try and integrate as best they can within their school.

Chapter Eight – Conclusions and Recommendations

Within the conclusion, the researcher explores the insights gained through undertaking this study. The aims of the research are reviewed and the implications for further research are discussed.

1 – CONCLUSIONS

In chapter one, section two, the main aim, overall research question and sub-questions were set out. The research was undertaken in order to develop an understanding of the educational experiences of army children at Secondary level, by answering the main research question *what is the experience of education of the army child*? In order to answer this main research question, the following sub-questions were explored - *What are the factors likely to influence their experiences in school? How do these children perceive their educational experiences? How do other people perceive their educational experiences?*

Returning to the research questions

The background factors likely to influence the school experiences of army children were explored in chapters two and four. Mobility was seen to be a major influencing factor – it can affect the number of schools a child attends, as well as the length of stay at a school. In the case of the four army children involved in this research, mobility was seen to affect the quality of their experiences in school – for example, moving from school to school influenced their opportunity to make and maintain lasting 'learning' relationships with their teachers. In the same way, moving also influenced their opportunity to make and maintain friends. Over time, it was suggested that constant mobility might have influenced these four children's ability to learn. This might have an effect on their educational achievements.

The situation at home and the school's response to the army population can both be seen to be influencing factors. For the four army children in this study, how their family responded to mobility and the absence of the serving soldier (in two cases in particular) was seen to affect their ability to perform in school. For one of the children, his family seemed unable to cope with the unique 'stressors' of army life which resulted in feelings of instability. As a result, he was unable to concentrate fully at school and work to the best of his ability.

Of the two schools visited during the course of this research one appeared to have a good understanding of the wider implications of army life and was perceived to be successful at supporting and including army children. At the other school, where local army officials failed to maintain links, the school appeared to be over-whelmed by the difficulties that an army population could pose and was considered not to deal adequately with the situation. For both schools, however, their response to their army intake was also seen to be affected by the response of the army at a local level.

On top of all of these factors are the army child's own responses to mobility, the situation at home and the school. Rather than being seen as passive actors within the educational process, the army children involved in this research developed individual coping strategies to these factors, such as withdrawing from teachers and self-reliance. The teachers involved in this work reported that some of these strategies were seen to be very positive such as taking responsibility for one's learning and actively trying to make up missed work, whilst other coping strategies might be more negative such as choosing not to make use of teacher support and advice. The four army children involved in this research made choices which influenced their educational experiences.

Looking at how army children perceived their educational experiences was explored in chapter five. The army children in this research perceived their unique educational experiences to be 'normal' and did not question the impact that their way of life might have on their time at school. They appeared to be matter of fact about moving schools and having to start all over again. When questioned further, the four army children and their peers involved in a group interview did describe the sadness at making friends and losing them. Their perception of educational difficulties was confined to the social sphere of schools, rather than the impact moving schools might have on their school-work. It was felt that they described their schools and their teachers with a degree of distance. They seemed to be somewhat dislocated from their educational experiences and did not take ownership of their schools. This was considered to be as a result of continually moving on and wishing to avoid the pain of constantly saying hello and goodbye.

The perceptions of other people (for example, teachers and parents) were explored in chapter six. Teachers in both of the schools visited outlined the curricular difficulties that army children can have if they transfer into school mid-way through a school year or a Key Stage. *These difficulties were seen to be* particularly acute at Key Stage Four when teachers worried that transferring between schools would have a very negative effect on a child's ability to achieve at GCSE. Some teachers mentioned the social issues connected to school transfer from the point of view of the army child having to make friends in a new school and almost withdrawing from friends when they knew they were going to be moving schools. Furthermore, for the children who stayed on at school, these children were faced with social instability as members of their social group had left. There was a tendency in both schools, however, for teachers to over-generalise by stating that army children were all 'good' at fitting in. In doing so, it was felt that some of the social difficulties might not be attended to by the teaching staff in the two schools visited.

The headteachers and school managers in both schools involved in the research described the funding difficulties their schools experienced caused by a highly mobile population. They detailed how army children might arrive after the pupil census and, in doing so, might not be adequately funded until the next pupil census. Children might leave after the pupil census and this might cause a school to pay back funding to local education authorities. The two headteachers also described the difficulties they experienced creating and maintaining links with local garrisons. A local authority (LA) official commented on funding issues within his own LA and also mentioned the number of cases of Special Educational Need (SEN) he saw amongst army children within his LA. This had an effect on the schools in that LA in that they required additional support from the LA to identify and meet the child's SEN. Parents of army children within this study, interviewed on their own and in a group interview, were not felt to be involved with their children's schooling. There was a sense that their children should 'get on' with their own lives and maintain some sort of responsibility for their own educational experiences. For three of the parents in this study, it was felt that they were less involved perhaps due to their own educational experiences being poor and also because the army mothers might not be able to cope during their partner's absences.

So what is the experience of education of the army child? It is clear from the research sub-questions explored above that there is a notable difference between the actual experiences and the perceptions of the army children in this study and the perceptions of other interested groups. The four army children involved in this research placed a great deal of importance on the social side of their school experiences which was, for the most part, ignored by (or, at least, not understood by) their parents, teachers and other education officials. These children's mobile existence required them to fit in to new schools as the lack of curricular continuity often required the children to make up work themselves. Education, for these army children, could take second place, particularly if there were disruptions at home. All four children described disruptions occurring due to moving posting (thus, necessitating a change of school) and three of the children experienced disruption during the research caused by their father (the serving soldier) being away from home either on exercise, on a more extended tour of duty or because he had chosen to retain a quarter far away from his work. For two of the children, whose separation from their father was caused by an extended tour of duty, the focus was on other things such as supporting their mothers and helping to keep the family unit together rather than focusing on school-work and educational achievement.

The five theories that have emerged as a result of undertaking this research (explored in chapter seven) have helped to develop an understanding of the educational experiences of army children at Secondary level. The first theory supported by this research suggested that the four army children in this study used different coping strategies to help them manage their educational experiences and that they had unique perceptions. The key to understanding these army children's coping strategies was the extent to which they protected their mothers / identified with the army / broke off friendships / depersonalised their learning experiences. All of these children actively carried out these strategies to some degree but some did so more than others. Secondly, mobility was considered to have an influence on the educational experiences of the four army children in this study, in their relationships with their teachers and peers. The third theory emerging from this research suggested that, in the two research sites visited, there was a clash of cultures between the world of the school and the world of the army. It was argued that the world of the army and the world of the school each have a set of values, language and a way of doing things that make

them unique and different from each other, resulting in relationships between the two schools and the army becoming increasingly difficult. The fourth theory supported by this research considers that the influence of the home culture has an impact on the army child's educational experiences. Many aspects of service life influenced the experiences that the four case study children had at home and which affected their experiences at school. Finally, the research suggested that the two schools involved in this research and the army both in the locality of the schools and nationally do not seem to fully understand the educational experiences of army children. This is likely to result in the army children being expected to *integrate* into the school community rather than being *included* in it.

In conclusion, some of the theories put forward might be able to be attributed to any minority child in order to explain their experiences of education. There are aspects of minority life that have been considered to be indicative of one culture set against the culture of the dominant education system (Willis, 1977; Bourdieu, 1997; Lareau, 1997). In this sense, both the overall culture, as well as the home culture, of minority children can be seen to contribute towards poor experiences of education. However, the experience of mobility and the culture of service life are unique to army children. Added to the other theories emerging from this research, an understanding of the unique experiences of army children emerges. The key to understanding the experiences of education of these army children is appreciating that these theories are interwoven. The four army children investigated seemed to be disadvantaged by two major factors, mobility and cultural clash, that impacted on their experiences of education. However, the factors of home background (including the family's response to father absence, the mother's ability to cope in father's absence and the parents' own experiences of education), the children's own coping strategies and the schools' and the army's responses to army children might explain why some of the army children involved in this research appeared to 'thrive' at school, whilst others merely 'survived' the experience.

Self-reflection

Insights gained from this study should not be limited to theories that have emerged from data-collection and analysis. It is only at the end of the research process that the researcher can consider whether there is anything that she would have carried out differently. As the research questions were the starting point

from which this work has emerged, reflecting on these questions is necessary. Would a different set of research questions have resulted *in more appropriate* data and, thus, different analyses?

It was impossible to tell at the start of the research process just how important the influence of the home environment would be on the educational experiences of the army child. It was only through discussion with the children, their parents and their teachers that it was realised that the home in its broadest sense, incorporating the influence of the army within the domestic sphere, was a key influencing factor. It could be argued, therefore, that a further research question should have been formulated which investigated these influences. For example *what are the home experiences of the army child?* Indeed, Mayall (2002: 110) argues strongly that children have a higher (moral) status at home compared to school. However, this would have necessitated a move away from an educational ethnography towards a wider sociological study of the army child. Whilst this would have proved interesting, it is possible that the researcher's previous research experience (in schools only) would not have prepared her for this change in focus of setting.

Consideration should also be given to the research methods employed during data collection – whether they were, on reflection, appropriate to the task or whether they could have been modified. The researcher considers that all but one of the research methods was employed fully during the research. That is to say, the use of interview, observation, field notes and documentary analysis was considered to be successful, given the range and quantity of data gathered in this way. Through the use of auto-photography, the researcher became increasingly aware of its potential as a means of validating data and also of exploring new themes. It is possible, therefore, that the use of auto-photography could have been used at an earlier stage in the data collection process.

2 – RECOMMENDATIONS

In chapter three, the researcher explored the ability to generalise from small-scale research, such as this, where only four children's stories have been explored. The researcher concluded that generalisability is difficult from this study, although the researcher had taken steps to address the issue and enable the findings to 'fit'

other army school contexts. Instead, the researcher proposed that the research should be viewed as a means of increasing our understanding of army children's educational experiences. As a result, in this section, the researcher presents her recommendations for future research which are based on the experiences highlighted in this work. In doing so, it is hoped that a body of collective knowledge (Hammersley, 1992:76) can be amassed which might contribute eventually to changes in policy and practice.

The researcher, therefore, recommends that further research be undertaken in this area. Initially, further qualitative research into the experiences of education of army children should be undertaken at several research sites across the UK and at SCE schools. In this way, it might be possible to identify whether there are common or different factors which affect the educational experiences of army children. Within the course of this research, the experience of education in SCE schools and in other nation states was touched upon through the stories of two of the focus children. However, this is an issue which needs to be examined in greater detail.

The findings from this study support research which has drawn attention to the effect of home influences on how children perform at school (David et al. 1993; Alexander, 1997; DfES, 1997; David, 2005). The researcher recommends, therefore, that any further research being conducted in this area should include, as much as possible, the viewpoints and experiences of army parents.

This research has looked at the experiences of army children only. It is also recommended that further research be conducted into the experiences of other service children in order to understand their different experiences of service life and any possible impact of their service lifestyle on their educational experiences. In doing so, the researcher hopes that improvements can be made in educational policy and practice for all service children.

It is recommended that further research into the impact of mobility be carried out. In chapter two, page 30, the link between mobility and attainment was interpreted 'cautiously' by Strand (2002). Within this research, it was suggested that all four focus children had low literacy scores and that this might be influenced by the mobility of the children involved. The researcher recommends, therefore, that

further work be conducted in this area. The effect of multiple moves on a child's educational experiences should also be explored in greater detail.

This research supports research findings (Spencer, 1976; Nicholls and Gardner, 1999; Galton, 2000; Ofsted 2002a) which have consistently highlighted the issue of incomplete and missing school records as being problematic for service children. The researcher recommends, therefore, that an audit of school records be carried out so that schools and teachers can become aware of the extent of this problem.

Finally, this research has focused on the experiences of army children only. The teachers involved in this study described, during their interviews, the difficulties involved in teaching a highly mobile population and the impact that this might have on their enjoyment of working in schools in areas with a high army population. It is recommended, therefore, that further research be conducted in the area of teachers' professional development in order to develop policy and practice in army schools.

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